READ THE BEST—STREET & SMITH'S MAGAZINES

Western

Every Week Mar. 22, 1930

S Magazi

REG. U.S. PAT. OFF. STREET AND SMITH PUBLICATION

15¢
20¢ IN CANADA

He launched himself forward and hooked his elbow over the boat.

from BOOMER by ROBERT ORMOND CASE

America's Finest LOW PRICED RUGS

See *Them All in Actual Colors*

Write *for* Beautiful FREE Book *of* 40 Model Rooms

All Rugs Woven Seamless, Reversible, Any Color, Any Size, in One Week

Persian design—a rich blending of colors

Japanese design on rich Taupe field

Save ½

~Send Old Rugs, Clothing *to the* OLSON FACTORY

WE PAY FREIGHT, EXPRESS, PARCEL POST FROM ALL STATES

NO AGENTS

We employ no agents or canvassers. The Olson Rug Co. is the largest rug concern in the world selling direct to homes. You save all unnecessary middlemen's expenses and commissions.

MAIL the handy coupon now for the new FREE Olson book of model rooms in colors. See all the beautiful plain, fancy, and Oriental pattern rugs we can weave from your old materials. No matter how faded or worn your material is, no matter what color, we are able to extract the wool, and other materials, by our Patented Process so it is just as good as it ever was.

Your material is sorted, washed, pickered, carded, combed, bleached, respun, and redyed . . . then newly woven into **Duo-Velvety rugs** that look and feel like brand new rugs.

You Risk Nothing by a Trial

We invite you to compare these **new** and **finer** rugs with costly Axminsters, and judge for color, durability and price. If not delighted, send them back at our expense and we will pay for your materials.

Mail Coupon to Dept. F-94, Chicago, Ill.

Mail for FREE Book

OLSON RUG CO., Dept. F-94, Laflin St., Chicago.

Gentlemen:—Please send without charge or obligation your new book of 40 MODEL ROOMS IN COLOR that illustrates all the different patterns and colors you can weave from my old materials.

Name.....

Address.....

Town.....State.....

Our 56th Year

OLSON RUG CO.

Display Rooms and Offices in: Chicago, New York, Detroit, St. Louis, Milwaukee, Cleveland, San Francisco

© O.R.Co. 1930

IT ISN'T SUCH A BUM WORLD AFTER ALL!!

WHEN YOU WORK UNDER A SIMON LEGREE STRAW BOSS WITH A TIME CLOCK STARING AT YOU ALL THE TIME—

AND YOU NEVER HAVE ANYTHING IN YOUR POCKETS EXCEPT A HOLE —

AND BILLS KEEP PILING UP ON YOU TILL YOU CAN'T SEE HOW IN THE SAM HILL YOU'RE EVER GOING TO GET OUT OF DEBT—

AND THEN YOU FIND IN A LITTLE BOOK THE KEY TO SECRETS WHICH HAVE MADE THOUSANDS COMFORTABLY WELL OFF AND EVEN RICH—

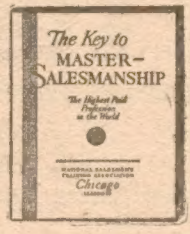
AND YOU START USING THOSE SECRETS YOURSELF AND LEARN WHAT IT IS TO REALLY MAKE BIG MONEY AS A SALESMAN —

OH FELLERS IT ISN'T SUCH A BUM WORLD AFTER ALL

When Men Raise Their Pay $3,000 to $7,000 a Year ...*After Reading This Little Free Book!*

A MARVELOUS little free book is bringing vital news to thousands of men today and making momentous changes in their lives. Just sixty-four pages —about seven ounces of paper and printers' ink; but there are thousands of men holding down big-pay jobs all over the United States and Canada with earnings running up to $10,000 a year, and even bigger, who started by reading this great book.

Take, for instance, Frank J. Walsh of Ludlow, Massachusetts. Just a few years ago, Walsh was struggling along on $1,000 a year. In just one evening, reading this little free volume, he made the change in his life that raised his pay over 600%.



About the same time that Walsh was getting his start two other men—C. V. Champion of Danville, Illinois, and R. B. Hansen of Akron, Ohio—were reading it too. Both were factory hands at the time—but today both of them are *presidents* of prosperous and growing companies with incomes over $10,000 a year! Just lately a California cowboy named William Shore spent an evening reading this book, in a ranchhouse. It wasn't many months later that he told us of one week when he made $525 clear, as a salesman.

Men from all walks of life—men who never dreamed they could master the secrets of salesmanship—regular fellows just like anybody else, without any extra advantages of money or education—that's what these men are. This little book, and the marvelous N. S. T. A. Demonstration Method, are specially planned to help just that kind of men—ambitious average fellows. The N. S. T. A. does something which people said could not be done—*it makes salesmen*—successful high power earners, out of average men with normal every-day brains. It has proved that salesmen do not have to be "born." It teaches, in easy, yet thorough lessons, right in your home, the secrets which great salesmen have spent years on the road to learn.

You can't keep a good man down—not if he really is a good man and will take advantage of his opportunities to rise in life. This book, "The Key to Master Salesmanship," brings ambitious men the chance they've all been looking for—the chance to get away from dull routine time-clock jobs at low pay. It shows them the way to a free employment service which gives N. S. T. A. members the pick of over 50,000 high-pay jobs every year.

Right now this book, "The Key to Master Salesmanship," which showed these men how to get started on the road to success and independence, will be mailed as a gift to any ambitious man—absolutely free and without obligation. Why not see for yourself what amazing pay-raising secrets it contains? There is no better way to invest a two cent stamp! Simply fill out and mail the coupon to us today.

NATIONAL SALESMEN'S TRAINING ASSOCIATION
Dept. C-582, N. S. T. A. Bldg., Chicago, Illinois

National Salesmen's Training Association, Dept. C-582,
N. S. T. A. Bldg., Chicago, Ill.
Please send me free and without obligation my copy of "The Key to Master Salesmanship," and full details of your Free Employment Service and other special "Earn While You Learn" features.

Name .....
Address .....
City .....State .....
Age .....Occupation .....

WESTERN STORY
MAGAZINE

Title Registered U. S. Patent Office.

EVERY WEEK

Yearly Subscription, $6.00 Six Months, $3.00 Single Copies, 15 Cents

The entire contents of this magazine are protected by copyright, and must not be reprinted without the publishers' permission.

Vol. XCIV Contents for March 22, 1930 No. 2

ONE NOVEL

Boomer . . . . . *Robert Ormond Case* . . 1

TWO SERIALS

Tiger's Den . . . . . *John Frederick* . . . 30
A Six-part Story—Part Two

The Trail To Paradise . . . . *Jackson Gregory* . . 61
A Six-part Story—Part Three

FIVE SHORT STORIES

Let Me Alone . . . . . *Lieutenant Mark Teague* . 26
What The Buzzards Said . . . *Austin Hall* 52
Timber Hungry . . . . . *Kenneth Gilbert* . . . 85
Treed . . . . . *Seth Ranger* . . . 107
Raised On Trouble . . . . . *George Cory Franklin* . 118

TWO ARTICLES

Dogs That Didn't Bark . . . . *D. C. Hubbard* . . . 116
Pioneer Towns of the West . . . *Duane Clark* . . . 130
(Reno, Nevada)

MISCELLANEOUS

Feather Yore Nest (Poem) . . . *C. Wiles Hallock* . . 115

Birds of the West and North America (The Scaup Duck) . . . 25
Paper And Truck Gardens . . 51
The Predatory Deer 51
Alaska's First Dude Ranch . . 60
Not Enough Eggs 84
Alaska Acquires Buffalo . . . 84
City Quail Farm 106
A Bear War Breaks Out . . . 117
Speeding with a Gold Rush . . 117
Some Accomplished Animals . . 129
Fourteen Quakes In One Day . . 129

DEPARTMENTS

The Round-up . . . . . *The Editor* 133
The Hollow Tree . . . . . *Helen Rivers* . . . 136
Where To Go And How To Get There *John North* . . . 140
Missing 143

Publication issued every week by Street & Smith Publications, Inc., 79-89 Seventh Avenue, New York City. Ormond G. Smith, President; George C. Smith, Vice President and Treasurer; George C. Smith, Jr., Vice President; Ormond V. Gould, Secretary. Copyright, 1930, by Street & Smith Publications, Inc., New York. Copyright, 1930, by Street & Smith Publications, Inc., Great Britain. Entered as Second-class Matter, September 4, 1917, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under Act of Congress of March 3, 1879. Canadian Subscription, $7.50. Foreign, $8.50.

We do not hold ourselves responsible for the return of unsolicited manuscripts.

All manuscripts must be addressed to the Editors, care of

STREET & SMITH PUBLICATIONS, INC., 79 7th AVE., NEW YORK, N. Y.

This *is* Fighting Talk

IF YOU'RE a quitter you won't read far in this advertisement. If you're not—if you have the courage to face facts—you want to know who is responsible for your not getting ahead faster. We'll tell you. It's YOU. The man who won't be licked *can't* be licked. If you're a drifter you'll always wish for success but never do anything about it. The earth is cluttered with that kind.

If you're a fighter you *will* do something about it. You'll get the special training that fits you for a bigger job and better pay.

In spare time, right at home, you can get the training you need through the International Correspondence Schools. Thousands of other men have lifted themselves out of the rut and into well-paid, responsible positions by I. C. S. study. Are they better men than you?

The time for action is *this minute.* Find out about this practical educational method that lets you learn while you earn. Check the subjects that interest you in the coupon below and mail it today. It doesn't obligate you in any way to ask for full particulars, yet that one simple act may be the means of making your entire life happier and more successful. *Do it now!*

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS, Box 4907-B, Scranton, Penna.

Without cost or obligation, please send me a copy of your booklet, "Who Wins and Why," and full particulars about the course *before* which I have marked X in the list below:

TECHNICAL AND INDUSTRIAL COURSES

☐ Architect	☐ Reading Shop Blueprints	☐ Automobile Mechanic	☐ Chemistry
☐ Architectural Draftsman	☐ Telegraph Engineer	☐ Aviation Engines	☐ Pharmacy
☐ Building Foreman	☐ Telephone Work	☐ Plumber and Steam Fitter	☐ Coal M'ning Engineer
☐ Concrete Builder	☐ Mechanical Engineer	☐ Plumbing Inspector	☐ Navigation ☐ Assayer
☐ Contractor and Builder	☐ Mechanical Draftsman	☐ Foreman Plumber	☐ Iron and Steel Worker
☐ Structural Draftsman	☐ Machine Shop Practice	☐ Heating and Ventilation	☐ Textile Overseer or Supt.
☐ Structural Engineer	☐ Toolmaker	☐ Sheet-Metal Worker	☐ Cotton Manufacturing
☐ Electrical Engineer	☐ Patternmaker	☐ Steam Engineer	☐ Woolen Manufacturing
☐ Electrical Contractor	☐ Civil Engineer	☐ Marine Engineer	☐ Agriculture ☐ Fruit Growing
☐ Electric Wiring	☐ Surveying and Mapping	☐ Refrigeration Engineer	☐ Poultry Farming
☐ Electric Lighting	☐ Gas Engine Operating	☐ R.R. Positions	☐ Mathematics ☐ Radio

BUSINESS TRAINING COURSES

☐ Business Management	☐ Cost Accounting	☐ Business Correspondence	☐ Mail Carrier
☐ Industrial Management	☐ Bookkeeping	☐ Show Card and Sign Lettering	☐ Grade School Subjects
☐ Personnel Management	☐ Secretarial Work	☐ Stenography and Typing	☐ High School Subjects
☐ Traffic Management	☐ Spanish ☐ French	☐ English	☐ Cartooning
☐ Accounting and C.P.A. Coaching	☐ Salesmanship	☐ Civil Service	☐ Illustrating
	☐ Advertising	☐ Railway Mail Clerk	☐ Lumber Dealer

Name..... Address.....

City..... State..... Occupation.....

If you reside in Canada, send this coupon to the International Correspondence Schools Canadian, Limited, Montreal, Canada

$3,750.00 REWARD

CAN YOU FIND THE KEY TO THIS PRIZE BAG OF GOLD?

There are 20 keys pictured below. To be sure, they all look alike BUT, examine them closely. 19 of them are exactly alike but **"ONE"** and only one is DIFFERENT FROM ALL THE OTHERS. It is the key to OPEN THE PADLOCK on this $3750.00 prize bag of gold. **SEE IF YOU CAN FIND IT. Hurry!** Win this $3750.00. A number of new 6-cylinder 4-door sedans and cash prizes too will be given. This offer is open to all and it costs nothing to try.

THESE CLUES WILL HELP YOU TO FIND THE DIFFERENT KEY!

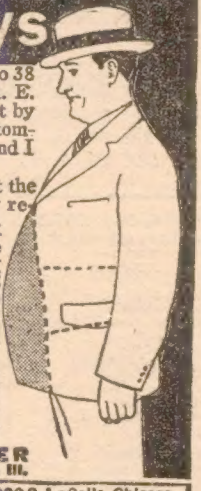
The difference may be in the size, the shape, or even in the notches. So, STUDY EACH KEY CAREFULLY and if you find the **"ONE"** key that is different from all the others, SEND THE NUMBER OF IT with your name and address TO ME AT ONCE on a post card or in a letter. You may become the winner of a $2,000.00 Special Buick Sedan and $1750.00 cash extra, or $3750.00 all in cash—without one cent of cost to you.

$1750.00 CASH—EXTRA FOR PROMPTNESS!

Absolutely, I will pay $1750.00 cash extra to the first prize winner just for promptness. In the event of a tie for any of the prizes offered, the full amount of the prize tied for will be awarded to each tying contestant. Hurry!—write the number of the **"ONE"** key that is different from all the others and your name and address on a post card or in a letter and MAIL IT TODAY—sure. Win that $3750.00! As soon as I get your reply, I'll tell you how you can get this wonderful prize of $3750.00 cash without any obligation or one penny of cost to you.

G. FORD, Dep't. 257, 537 South Dearborn Street, CHICAGO, ILL.

10 Inches Off Waistline In 35 Days



"I reduced from 48 inches to 38 inches in 35 days," says R. E. Johnson, of Akron, O., "just by wearing a Director Belt. Stomach now firm, doesn't sag and I feel fine."

The Director Belt gets at the *cause* of fat and quickly removes it by its gentle, kneading, massaging action on the abdomen, which causes the fat to be dissolved and absorbed. Thousands have proved it and doctors recommend it as the natural way to reduce. Stop drugs, exercises and dieting. Try this easy way.

Sent on Trial

Let us prove our claims. We'll send a Director for trial. If you don't get results you owe nothing. You don't risk a penny. Write for trial offer, doctors' endorsements and letters from users. Mail the coupon NOW!

LANDON & WARNER
332 S. La Salle St., Chicago, Ill.

Landon & Warner, Dept. C-78, 332 S. La Salle, Chicago

Gentlemen: Without cost or obligation on my part please send me details of your trial offer.

Name.....

Address.....

LAW Free Book

Write today for FREE 64-page book, "THE LAW-TRAINED MAN", which shows how to learn law in spare time through the Blackstone home-study course prepared by 80 prominent legal authorities, including law school deans, and U. S. Supreme Court justices. Combination text and case method of instruction used. All material necessary furnished with the course, including elaborate 26-volume law library, delivered immediately upon enrollment. Many successful attorneys among our graduates. LL. B. degree conferred. Moderate tuition, low monthly terms. Money-Back Agreement.

Write for free book today.

BLACKSTONE INSTITUTE, 307 N. Michigan Ave. Dept. 173 Chicago

450 Miles on a Gallon of Gas!

According to a recent article by the president of the world's largest motor research corporation, there is enough energy in a gallon of gasoline if converted 100% in mechanical energy to run a four cylinder car 450 miles.

NEW GAS SAVING INVENTION ASTONISHES CAR OWNERS

A marvelous device, already installed on thousands of cars, has accomplished wonders in utilizing a portion of this waste energy and is producing mileage tests that seem unbelievable. Not only does it save gasoline, but it also creates more power, gives instant starting, quick pick-up, and eliminates carbon.

FREE SAMPLE and $100 a Week

To obtain national distribution quickly, men are being appointed everywhere to help supply the tremendous demand. Free samples furnished to workers. Write to-day to E. Oliver, Pres., for this free sample and big money making offer.

WHIRLWIND MFG. CO.
999-172-A Third St., Milwaukee, Wisc.

Speechless...When a Few Words Would Have Made Me!

But now I can face the largest audience without a trace of stage fright.

THE annual banquet of our Association—the biggest men in the industry present—and without a word of warning the Chairman called on me to speak—and my mind went blank!

I half rose from my seat, bowed awkwardly and mumbled, "I'm afraid you'll have to excuse me today," and dropped back in my chair.

Speechless—when a few words would have made me! The opportunity I had been waiting for all my life—and I had thrown it away! If I could have made a simple little speech—giving my opinion of trade conditions in a concise, witty, interesting way, I know I would have been made for life!

Always I have been a victim of paralyzing stage fright. Because of my timidity, my diffidence, I was just a nobody, with no knack of impressing others—of putting myself across. No matter how hard I worked, it all went for nothing—I could never win the big positions, the important offices, simply because I was tongue-tied in public.

And then like magic I discovered how to overcome my stage fright—and I was amazed to learn that I actually had a natural gift for public speaking. With the aid of a splendid new method, I rapidly developed this gift, until, in a ridiculously short time, I was able to face giant audiences—without a trace of stage fright!

Today I am one of the biggest men in our industry. Scarcely a meeting or banquet is held without me being asked to speak. My real ability, which was hidden so long by stage fright, is now recognized by everyone. I am asked to conferences, luncheons and banquets as a popular after-dinner speaker. This amazing training has made me into a self-confident aggressive talker—an easy, versatile conversationalist—almost overnight.

* * * * *

No matter what work you are now doing nor what may be your station in life; no matter how timid and self-conscious you now are when called upon to speak, you can quickly bring out your natural ability and become a powerful speaker. Now, through an amazing new training you can quickly shape yourself into an outstanding influential speaker, able to dominate one man or five thousand.

What 20 Minutes a Day Will Show You

How to talk before your club or lodge
How to address board meetings
How to propose and respond to toasts
How to make a political speech
How to tell entertaining stories
How to make after-dinner speeches
How to converse interestingly
How to write better letters
How to sell more goods
How to train your memory
How to enlarge your vocabulary
How to overcome stage fright
How to develop self confidence
How to acquire a winning personality
How to strengthen your will-power and ambition
How to become a clear, accurate thinker
How to develop your power of concentration
How to be the master of any situation

In 20 Minutes a Day

This new method is so delightfully simple and easy that you cannot fail to progress rapidly. Right from the start you will find that it is becoming easier and easier to express yourself. Thousands have proved that by spending only 20 minutes a day in the privacy of their own homes they can acquire the ability to speak so easily and quickly that they are amazed at the great improvement in themselves.

Send for this Amazing Booklet

This new method of training is fully described in a very interesting and informative booklet which is now being sent to everyone mailing the coupon below. This booklet is called *How to Work Wonders with Words*. In it you are told how this new, easy method will enable you to conquer stage fright, self-consciousness, timidity, bashfulness and fear. Not only men who have made millions but thousands of others have sent for this booklet and are unstinting in their praise of it. You are told how you can bring out and develop your priceless "hidden knack"—the natural gift within you—which will win you advancement in position and salary, popularity, social standing, power and real success. You can obtain your copy absolutely free by sending the coupon.

Now Sent FREE

NORTH AMERICAN INSTITUTE
3601 Michigan Ave.
Dept. 1753 Chicago, Illinois

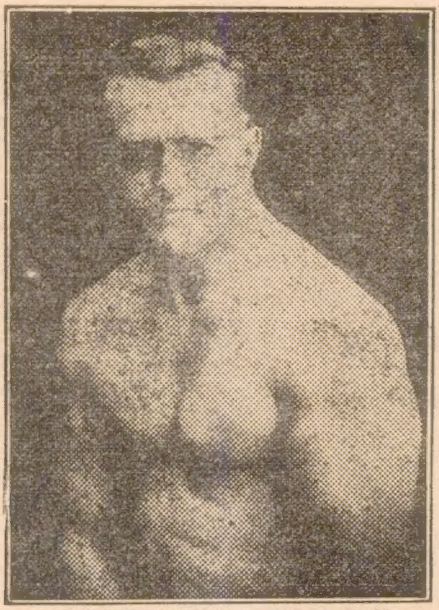
North American Institute
3601 Michigan Avenue
Dept. 1753, Chicago

Please send me FREE and without obligation my copy of your inspiring booklet, *How to Work Wonders with Words*, and full information regarding your course in Effective Speaking.

Name .....

Address .....

City .....State .....



EARLE LIEDERMAN—The Muscle-Builder
Author of "Science of Wrestling," "Muscle Building," "Secrets of Strength," "Here's Health," "Endurance," etc.

KILL THIS MAN!

THERE'S a devil inside of you. He's trying to kill you. Look out for him! He tells you not to work so hard. What's the use? The boss only piles more work on you. He tells you not to bother with your body. If you're weak—you always will be weak. Exercise is just a lot of rot. Do you recognize him? Of course you do. He's in us all. He's a murderer of ambition. He's a liar and a fool. Kill him! If you don't, he will kill you.

SAVED

Thank your lucky stars you have another man inside of you. He's the human dynamo. He fills you full of pep and ambition. He keeps you alive—on fire. He urges you on in your daily tasks. He makes you strive for bigger and better things to do. He makes you crave for life and strength. He teaches you that the weak fall by the wayside, but the strong succeed. He shows you that exercise builds live tissue—live tissue is muscle—muscle means strength—strength is power. Power brings success! That's what you want, and gosh darn your old hide you're going to get it!

WHICH MAN WILL IT BE?

It's up to you. Set your own future. You want to be the Human Dynamo? Fine! Well, let's get busy. That's where I come in. That's my job. Here's what I'll do for you:

In just 30 days I'll increase your arm one full inch with real live, animated muscle. Yes, and I'll add two inches to your chest in the same time. Pretty good, eh? That's nothing. Now come the works. I'll build up your shoulders. I'll deepen your chest. I'll strengthen your whole body. I'll give you arms and legs like pillars. I'll literally pack muscles up your stomach and down your back. Meanwhile I'll work on those inner muscles surrounding your vital organs. You'll feel the thrill of life shooting up your old backbone and throughout your entire system. You'll feel so full of life you will shout to the world, "I'm a man and I can prove it!"

Sounds good, what? But listen! That isn't all. I'm not just promising these things. **I guarantee them.** It's a sure bet. Oh, boy! Let's ride.

SEND FOR MY NEW 64-PAGE BOOK

"Muscular Development" It Is FREE

I don't ask one cent. And it's the peppiest piece of reading you ever laid your eyes on. I swear you'll never blink an eyelash till you've turned the last cover. And there are over four dozen full-page photos of myself and some of my prize-winning pupils. This is the finest art gallery of strong men ever assembled. And every last one of them is shouting my praises. Look them over. If you don't get a kick out of this book, you had better roll over—you're dead.

Come on, then. Take out the old pencil and sign your name and address to the coupon. Remember, it's something for nothing and no strings attached—no obligation. GRAB IT.
Earle Liederman, Dept. 3003, 305 Broadway, New York City

EARLE LIEDERMAN, Dept. 3003, 305 Broadway, New York City
Dear Sir:—Please send me without any obligation on my part whatever, a copy of your latest book "Muscular Development." (Please write or print plainly.)

Name ..... Age ....

Street .....

City ..... State .....

Modern Art Pays Big Money

In this Age of Color . . . the demand for art work is creating hundreds of big-pay opportunities. Manufacturers, decorators, publishers . . . are seeking men and women with art training.

Through the Federal course many have found fascinating careers. Hundreds of Federal students now earn from $2500 to $6000 a year. Learn at home in your spare time the Federal Way. More than fifty famous artists contribute exclusive lessons in illustrating, cartooning, lettering, designing.

Send us your name, age, occupation, and address, and we will send our book, "A Road To Bigger Things," and Vocational Art Test free.

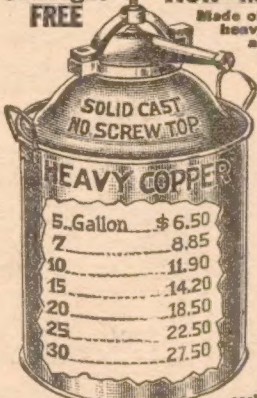
Federal School of Illustrating
3500 Federal Schools Building
Minneapolis, Minnesota

SONG WRITERS!

SUBSTANTIAL ADVANCE ROYALTIES are paid on work found acceptable for publication. Anyone wishing to write *either the words or music* for songs may submit work for free examination and advice. *Past experience unnecessary.* New demand created by "Talking Pictures" fully described in our free book. Write for it Today. NEWCOMER ASSOCIATES
722 Earle Building, New York

Factory Sale

Catalogue FREE — New Model Boiler



Made of EXTRA STRONG, heavy pure copper, with a 5-inch Solid Brass Cap and Spout. Easily cleaned. No Screw cap, no threads to get out of order. No burning of hands no trouble in taking off cover. Cap can be put on or taken off in a second by a simple twist of the thumb-screw on the top. Safe, practical, simple and durable. No article of such quality and utility ever sold at such low price. It's a low pressure boiler and pasteurizer. An ideal cooker for the home. Nothing better for general usages. It lasts a lifetime and gives real service and satisfaction.

Above are strictly cash with order Factory prices. Send money order or check. Prompt shipment in plain, strong box. Only can worth having. HOME MANUFACTURING CO.
18 E. Kinzie St., Dept. 5963, Chicago, Illinois

EASY AS A, B, C

IT'S *fun*

HELLO, POPULARITY!

Learning to play your favorite instrument this "no-teacher" way— *takes only a few months!*

ALL your life you've wanted to play a musical instrument. And now at last you can realize your ambition! Just choose your favorite instrument—the piano, the violin, the saxophone, whatever it may be—and then let the U. S. School of Music prove that you can learn to play it in an amazingly short time—*right in your own home—and without any private teacher.*

Mail the coupon NOW—and you will immediately receive an interesting Free booklet that tells you all about this wonderful new system—which has already taught over one-half million students to play their favorite musical instrument.

Musical Talent Not Needed

Even if you have never touched an instrument before you can't go wrong this amazingly easy way. For every step, from beginning to end, is right before your eyes in print and picture. You always know what to do and how to do it. No guess work. No delays. If you make a mistake you correct it yourself and continue. The whole course is as simple as A, B, C—and any child will tell you that studying the music this new way is even easier than learning to read.

There are no tricks—no stunts—no long tedious exercises—no dull, monotonous finger practice. Everything is clearly explained and simplified so that you get all the essentials of a thorough musical education—in short-cut fashion. In a few short months you will be able to render popular selections with ease and expression.

Some of our most successful students say that this home course in music is real fun—more fascinating than the most enjoyable game! For you study when you please—and as much as you please—*in your spare time.* You're not tied down to any specific practice hour either. You go fast or slow—it doesn't make a bit of difference because there isn't any expensive private teacher to pay.

With this new form of instruction, the cost averages the same in every case—*a few cents a day.*

Play Any Instrument

Piano	Drums and Traps
Organ	Plectrum Banjo
Violin	5-String Banjo
Mandolin	Tenor Banjo
Ukulele	Sight Singing
Clarinet	Piccolo
Flute	Trombone
Harp	Hawaiian Guitar
Cornet	Voice and Speech Culture
'Cello	Harmony and Composition
Guitar	Automatic Finger Control
Saxophone	Piano Accordion
	Italian and German Accordion

How To Be Popular

You'll be surprised to see how music will give you a greater joy and interest in life. It will enlarge your circle of friends—and will attract many new admirers. If you can play a musical instrument you will never feel "alone in a crowd". For as you dash off the latest song hit—or play some lovely melody from a well-known classic—you will always be in demand—you can't help being popular.

Free Booklet and Demonstration Lesson

If you are in earnest about wanting to join the crowd of entertainers and be a "big hit" at any party—if you really do want to play your favorite instrument, or become a professional performer whose services will be in demand for band and orchestra work, as a stage or radio artist—fill out and mail the convenient coupon asking for our Free Booklet and Free Demonstration Lesson. These explain our wonderful method fully and show you how easily and quickly you can learn to play at little expense. The booklet will also tell you all about the amazing new *Automatic Finger Control.* Instruments are supplied when needed—cash or credit. U. S. School of Music, 3593 Brunswick Bldg., New York City.

U. S. School of Music,
3593 Brunswick Bldg., New York City.

Please send me your free book, "Music Lessons in Your Own Home," with introduction by Dr. Frank Crane, Free Demonstration Lesson and particulars of your easy payment plan. I am interested in the following course:

.....

Have you above instrument?.....

Name .....
(Please Write Plainly)

Address .....

City .....State .....

Win $3,500.00

Prizes from $1800.00 to $4245.00 each have been won through our unique advertising plan. In our last, an old man of 69, out of work, won over $5000.00. A boy, only 15, won $900.00. In next 3 or 4 months thousands of dollars will be awarded to fortunate persons who solve our puzzles and win our prizes.

FIND THE TWIN FLYERS

Watch out! These twelve pictures of a famous woman flyer all look alike—BUT—two, and only two, are exactly alike. Find these twin flyers! Some pictures are different in the collar, helmet, goggles, or tie. Remember, only two of the twelve are exactly alike. Find them, and send the numbers of the twin flyers on a post card or letter today. If correct, your answer will qualify you for this opportunity.

$7160.00 IN PRIZES GIVEN THIS TIME

Over 25 prizes, and duplicate prizes in case of ties. It's up to the winner whether he or she chooses $2875.00 in cash or a new Waco airplane, a big automobile, or a new home. A gorgeous prize list! ANYONE WHO ANSWERS THIS PUZZLE CORRECTLY MAY RECEIVE PRIZES OR CASH.

$625.00 ADDITIONAL FOR PROMPTNESS

Be prompt! It pays. Find the real twin flyers, and I will send Certificate which will be good for $625.00 if you are prompt and win first prize. Imagine, a first prize of $3500.00!

NO MORE PUZZLES TO SOLVE. Any man, woman, boy, or girl in the U. S. A.—anyone at all, except residents of Chicago, Illinois, and former major prize winners. 25 of the people who take up this offer are going to win these wonderful prizes. Be one of them. Send the numbers of the twin flyers. Send no money, but be prompt.

J. D. SNYDER, Dept. 371, 54 W. Illinois St., Chicago, Ill.

Accounting
—THE CONTROL OF BUSINESS

Accountants command big income. Thousands needed. About 9,000 Certified Public Accountants in U. S. Many earn $5,000 to $20,000. We train you thoroughly at home in your spare time for C. P. A. examinations or executive accounting positions. Previous bookkeeping knowledge unnecessary—we prepare you from ground up. Our training is supervised by Wm. B. Castenholz, A. M., C. P. A., assisted by staff of C. P. A.'s. Low cost—easy terms. Write now for valuable 64-page book free.

This Book FREE!

LaSalle Extension University, Dept. 365-H Chicago

NO JOKE TO BE DEAF
—EVERY DEAF PERSON KNOWS THAT

I make myself hear, after being deaf for 25 years, with these Artificial Ear Drums. I wear them day and night. They stop head noises and ringing ears. They are perfectly comfortable. No one sees them. Write me and I will tell you a true story, how I got deaf and how I make you hear. Address

Medicated Ear Drum

GEO. P. WAY, Artificial Ear Drum Co. (Inc.)
150 Hoffman Bldg. Detroit, Mich.

Quit Tobacco

Don't try to banish unaided the hold tobacco has upon you. Thousands of inveterate tobacco users have, with the aid of the Keeley Treatment, found it easy to quit.

KEELEY TREATMENT FOR TOBACCO HABIT Quickly banishes craving for tobacco. Successful for over 50 years. Write today for FREE BOOK and our MONEY BACK GUARANTEE.

KEELEY INSTITUTE, Dept. D-814, Dwight, Illinois

Photos ENLARGED

Size 16x20 Inches

Same price for full length or bust form groups, landscapes, or pet animals, etc., enlargements of any part of group picture. Safe return of your own original photo guaranteed.

98c

SEND NO MONEY Just mail photo or snapshot (any size) and within a week you will receive your beautiful life-like enlargement size 16x20 in. guaranteed fadeless. Pay postman 98c plus postage or send $1.00 with order and we pay postage. SPECIAL With each enlargement we will send FREE a hand-tinted miniature reproduction of photo sent. Take advantage *now* of this amazing offer—send your photo today.

FREE OFFER

UNITED PORTRAIT COMPANY
900 W. Lake St., Dept. C-760, Chicago, Ill.

HOW TO OBTAIN

A Better Looking Nose!

Improve your personal appearance

My new Model 25 Nose Shaper is designed to improve the shape of the nose by remoulding the cartilage and fleshy parts, safely, and painlessly. This is accomplished thru the very fine and precise adjustments which only my patented Model 25 possesses. Results are lasting. Can be worn at night, or during the day. Money refunded if not satisfied after thirty days' trial. Write for free booklet to

M. TRILETY, Dept. 124, Binghamton, N. Y.
Pioneer Nose Shaping Specialist

WANT A GOVERNMENT JOB?

RAILWAY POSTAL CLERKS

City Carriers—Postoffice Clerks—General Clerks
Steady Work No Layoffs—Paid Vacations

$158 to $225 Month

Mail Coupon Before You Lose It

FRANKLIN INSTITUTE, Dept. G-195, ROCHESTER, N.Y.

Sirs: Rush to me without charge copy of 32-page book, "How to get U. S. Government Jobs," list of positions obtainable and full particulars telling how to get them.

Name.....

Address.....

Ohio Man Discovers "Crazy" Way to Make Money *Quick*

Just Say 20 Magic Words to 10 Ladies a Day and I Pay You Cash For It

Here's without question the strangest yet easiest way we knew of for honest men and women to make money in full or spare time. Just say 20 magic words to 10 ladies—and this million-dollar manufacturing company actually pays you cash. You don't need to sell a single thing. You don't even need one minute's sales experience. This is the latest and by far the greatest of all the sensational money-making offers of this famous leader—C. W. Van De Mark—the sales wizard who has already put more than 25,000 men and women on the road to prosperity. Again Van has proven his fearlessness! Again Van has come to the front for the workers of America. "Conservative" business leaders called Van "crazy" for making this radical cash pay agreement. They said it would ruin "conservative" traditions—upset "sane" business principles. Cooler heads called it the masterly stroke of America's master sales genius and declared it would prove itself one of the greatest of all prosperity boosters.

Get Van's Cash Agreement

I show you how to end your money worries. Just tell me how much you want—

$10.00 in a Day Full Time
$2.00 in an Hour Spare Time

and I will gladly send you my Written Agreement, legal and binding upon me. The more time you devote to this position the more money you get.

VAN

No Need to Sell Anything
To Get This Cash Pay

But now Van himself reveals the sensational truth. "Sudden overwhelming demand for our products is the reason"—says Van. Countless housewives suddenly learned through our recent nation-wide announcements that we can make amazing savings on household bills. So literally overnight the demand for our products has expanded almost to the "bursting" point. Now we must hurry and employ 1100 more local men and women to take care of regular customers. Time must not be wasted! Expense must not be considered! Orders must be filled quick! Customers must not be kept waiting! Big money for our representatives means nothing to us from now on! So I have smashed the so-called "conservative" business traditions—I now offer every honest man and woman a steady position and will pay actual cash for just a few hours of their full or spare time. You don't need sales experience. I don't need big talkers, "hot air shooters" or "city slickers." What I want is sincere men and women who will be as honest with me as I guarantee to be with them.

A $25,000.00 Bond Backs Our Guarantee

I Even Pay You a Cash Penalty
If You Don't Make Big Money the Very First Day

I make it easy and simple. Just say 20 magic words to 10 ladies a day—20 secret words that have proven almost magical money-getters for over 25,000 of my "partners"—an amazing yet strangely simple 20-word sentence that took me 35 years to discover. I give you 35 years of money-making experience in 2 minutes. I want to help my "partners" make as much money as they can. I don't try to "hog" it all. That's why my "partners" stick with me instead of jumping to other jobs. I not only pay you actual cash for your time—I go farther! I even pay you a handsome profit on every order my customers give you. So what is to stop you from making as high as $35 in a day like some of my other partners? I know what you can do if you'll just spend 4 or 5 hours a day honestly for me. And to prove that I feel sure of what I'm talking about I will actually pay you a cash penalty out of my own pocket if you don't make big money the very first day you follow my simple plan. But even if you don't get any orders I still pay you this cash penalty.

I Send You $13.00 Worth of Goods at My Risk to Start You.

Just Rush Coupon For This Offer.

I don't let you risk one penny. I'll take all the chances. I prove this to you. To show you that I handle big things in a big way, I will even send you $13.00 worth of my goods right out of stock to start you. Mail coupon at once for this sensational offer. Don't send a cent. I will send you letters from other men and women whom this free offer started on the road to independence. Why can't you do as well? Maybe you think this is just an ordinary job. But don't be mistaken. If you treat me fairly I'll set you up in a business of your own. I'll tell you a priceless secret that will get others to make money for you. Right now I promise to help toward ending your money worries, and I am known to 25,000 partners as the man who always keeps his promises. If $10 a day or even more will end your money worries, then mail the application below right now for this steady employment offer. Start in spare time if you wish and I'll still pay you this cash penalty. If you are a married woman, you can surely devote a few spare hours a day. My plan is a funny one. Some of my women "partners" have actually made more than their husbands in a few hours of this pleasant, dignified work. It's too bad that space here is not large enough to explain all my other daring money-making offers. I would also like to have you read some of the thousands of unusual letters from men and women "partners" whose money worries I have helped end. I would like to tell you what Howard L. Adams wrote about the new car I gave him, and about Rev. McMurphy's letter which said I enabled him to pay the mortgage on his home. I will even show you letters from grateful widows who are now able to support their families. It all sounds almost unbelievable—yet I prove every word of it at my own risk.

Start Your Pay Now

Send No Money. Just Mail Coupon.

I need 1100 more "partners" quick on my daring new cash pay plan. This announcement will probably "upset" the nation. Untold thousands will apply for these positions. If you delay it may be too late. The time to act is—NOW! Tear out the employment Application Coupon below and mail it quick for this steady position, offer of $13.00 worth of my goods and the 20 magic words that may mean a "fortune" to you. Send no money. Just the coupon. **This coupon is not an order** that obligates you to pay anything. Nothing will be sent C.O.D.

C. W. Van De Mark, President
The Health-O Quality Products Co.
Dept. 1094-CC, Health-O Bldg. Cincinnati, O.

C. W. Van De Mark, President
The Health-O Quality Products Co.
Dept. 1094-CC, Health-O Bldg.
Cincinnati, Ohio.

Dear Van: I hereby apply for the position as "partner" in my town on your new cash pay plan. Send your sensational offer of $13.00 worth of your products to start me. Also tell me how I can make money introducing you to 10 ladies and using the 20 magic words that make fortunes. This is not an order—send nothing C.O.D. I risk nothing.

Name .....

Address .....

City .....State .....

Save $20.00 with this OFFER. Send no money

Get Strong WITH These Improved Muscle Builders All for $5.00

Why pay an extravagant price for strength—here's an opportunity to get all the equipment you require along with an excellent course of instructions for only $5.00. Realize your ambition and develop muscles of a super-man. Get strong and amaze your friends. We show you how to easily master feats which now seem difficult—or if you just want physical culture for your health's sake, this equipment is just what you need. With this special offer you save at least $20.00. We furnish a ten cable chest expander which is adjustable to give resistance up to 200 lbs. It is made of new live extra strength, springy rubber so as to assure long wear and give the resistance you need for real muscle development. You also get a pair of patented hand grips for developing powerful grip and forearms.

We include wall exercising parts which permit you to develop your back, arms and legs—a real muscle necessity. You know that business men and athletes, too, first show their age in their legs. Develop your leg muscles with the foot strap which we furnish. This will give you speed and endurance—but that isn't all that you get. In addition we include a specially written course which contains pictures and diagrams showing you how to develop any part of your body so that you will quickly get on with these exercises and gain the greatest advantage from their use. Act now while you can get in on this special offer. It might be withdrawn, so rush the coupon.

SEND NO MONEY

All of the items pictured on this page are included in this big special reduction offer. Sign your name and address to the coupon below and rush it to us. We will send your ten cable chest developer, the wall parts, a pair of hand grips, foot strap and the course by return mail. Pay the postman only $5.00, plus the few cents postage on arrival. (If you desire to send check or money order in advance, we pay postage.)

GUARANTEE

All Crusader products are guaranteed to give entire satisfaction or money back.

CRUSADER APPARATUS CO.,
Dept. 3303, 44 Parker Ave., Maplewood, N. J.

I accept your offer. Send me everything described in your advertisement by return mail. I will pay postman $5.00 plus postage on arrival. It is understood if I am not entirely satisfied after examination I can return the goods and you will refund my money.

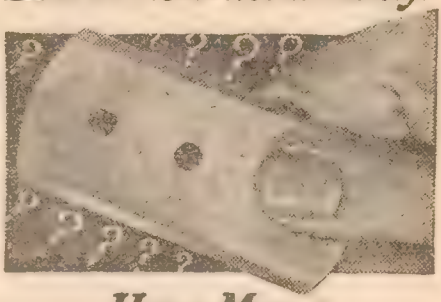
Note:—No C. O. D. Orders to Foreign Countries or Canada.

Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____

USED...but Worth Money!



How Many Old Razor Blades Have You On Hand?

DON'T throw them away! Old razor blades are worth money now—thanks to an amazing invention called KRISS KROSS! For this astonishing little machine can take almost any old blade and restore it to 100% sharpness in exactly 11 seconds—making it last for weeks and even months! Any number of cases are on record where this remarkable invention has actually given 365 keen, cool shaves from a single blade!

So no wonder experts call KRISS KROSS more than a stropper. It is really a super-stropper or blade-rejuvenator! Employs master barber's diagonal stroke. Automatic flip-flop action. Fits all blades except Durham. Gives them the keenest cutting edge that steel can take!

Sensational Offer

And now for my surprising offer. To introduce KRISS KROSS to those who have not yet seen it, I am giving with it Free a new kind of razor. Possesses remarkable features. Instantly adjustable to any shaving position. Comes with 5 special-process blades and is entirely unlike anything you ever saw before!

Mail coupon now while this special offer is still good.

MAKES $66 IN ONE DAY

Find out how to make $100 a week and more just showing KRISS KROSS to men in your locality. Full or spare time. H. King earned $66 in one day. We show you how. It's easy. Check bottom of coupon for details and generous proposition. Mail it now.

KRISS KROSS CORP.
Dept. C-3294, 1418 Pendleton Ave., St. Louis, Mo.

KRISS KROSS CORP., Dept. C-3294,
1418 Pendleton Ave., St. Louis, Mo.

Without obligation, please send me illustrated description and full details of your special introductory offer on KRISS KROSS super stropper and FREE 3-way razor.

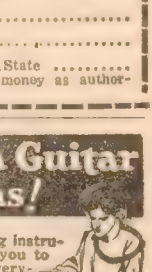
Name .....

Address .....

City ..... State .....

( ) Check here if interested in making money as authorized KRISS KROSS representative.

Play the Hawaiian Guitar like the Hawaiians!



Only 4 Motions used in playing this fascinating instrument. Our native Hawaiian instructors teach you to master them quickly. Pictures show how. Everything explained clearly.

Play in Half Hour
After you get the four easy motions you play harmonious chords with very little practice. No previous musical knowledge needed.

Easy Lessons
Even if you don't know one note from another, the 52 printed lessons and clear pictures make it easy to learn quickly. Pay as you play.

GIVEN *when you enroll* **—a sweet toned HAWAIIAN GUITAR, Carrying Case and Playing Outfit—Value $18 to $20**
No extras—everything included

WRITE AT ONCE for attractive offer and easy terms. You have everything to gain. A postcard will do. ACT!

TENOR BANJO and other courses. The same thorough instruction on Tenor Banjo, Violin, Tiple, Tenor Guitar, Ukulele, Banjo Ukulele. Well-known instructors. Write for full information.

FIRST HAWAIIAN CONSERVATORY of MUSIC, Inc.
9th Floor, Woolworth Bldg. Dept. 239 New York, N. Y.
Approved as a Correspondence School Under the Laws of the State of New York —Member National Home Study Council

Amazingly Easy Way to get into ELECTRICITY

Don't spend your life waiting for $5 raises in a dull, hopeless job. Now...and forever...say good-bye to 25 and 35 dollars a week. Let me teach you how to prepare for positions that lead to $50, $60 and up to $200 a week in Electricity.

Learn Without Books or Lessons in 90 Days In the Great Coyne Shops

Lack of experience—age or advanced education bars no one. I don't care if you don't know an armature from an air brake—I don't expect you to. The secret of Coyne training is that it is ALL PRACTICAL WORK. No books—no dry lessons—YOU LEARN BY DOING on REAL ELECTRICAL MACHINERY. Everything from doorbells to power plants with instructors at your side at all times.

You can Earn while Learning, too

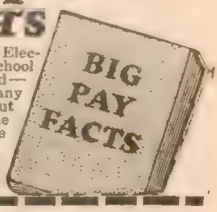
If you're short of money my Employment Department will help you FIND PART TIME WORK, and when you graduate they will help you get that BIG PAY ELECTRICAL JOB. I've done all this for thousands of others—I'll do the same for you.

AVIATION, RADIO AND AUTOMOBILE ELECTRICITY NOW

Right now I'm including my big new Aviation Electricity, Radio and Automobile Electricity courses at no extra cost.

COYNE ELECTRICAL SCHOOL
H. C. LEWIS, Pres. Established 1899
500 S. Paulina Street Dept. 30-45 Chicago, Ill.

GET THE FACTS



Coyne is your one great chance to get into Electricity. Every obstacle is removed. This school is 30 years old—COYNE training is tested—proven beyond all doubt—endorsed by many large electrical concerns. You can find out everything absolutely free. Simply mail the coupon and let me send you the big, free Coyne book of 150 photographs...facts...jobs...salaries...opportunities. This does not obligate you. So act at once. Just mail coupon. **GET THIS FREE BOOK.**

H. C. LEWIS, President
COYNE ELECTRICAL SCHOOL, Dept. 30-45
500 S. Paulina St., Chicago, Ill.

Please send me your Free, Illustrated Book on Electricity and Coyne. No obligation. Give details of special offer too.

Name.....

Address.....

City.....*State*.....

Home-Study Business Training

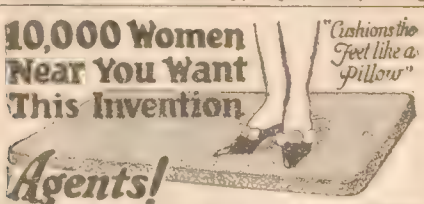
Your opportunity will never be bigger than your preparation. Prepare now and reap the rewards of early success. Free 64-Page Books Tell How. Write NOW for book you want, or mail coupon with your name, present position and address in margin today.

☐ Higher Accountancy	☐ Business Corres.
☐ Mod. Salesmanship	☐ Credit and Collection Correspondence
☐ Traffic Management	☐ Modern Foremanship
☐ Rail. Station Mgm't	☐ Personnel Mgm't
☐ Law: Degree of LL.B.	☐ Expert Bookkeeping
☐ Commercial Law	☐ C. P. A. Coaching
☐ Industrial Mgm't	☐ Business English
☐ Banking and Finance	☐ Commercial Spanish
☐ Telegraphy	☐ Effective Speaking
☐ Business Mgm't	☐ Stenotypy—Stenog'y
☐ Railway Accounting	

☐ Paper Salesman's Training

LaSalle Extension University, Dept. 365-R, Chicago

10,000 Women Near You Want This Invention



Agents!

MAKE UP TO $90 A WEEK

Something new, just out, a whirlwind seller—the amazing Kristee Comfort Foot-Mat. Greatest aid to housewives of the age. Rests the feet, takes strains and aches away when washing, ironing, doing dishes, cooking, etc. Made of durable, soft, velvety pure sponge rubber. Women everywhere welcome with open arms and buy on sight! Simply show it and take orders.

FREE OUTFIT Everything needed to start right out making money, given Free. No experience needed. We show you how. Send for Catalog of this and 47 other Quality Rubber Products. Direct from Akron, the Rubber City. *Write quick* for FREE Outfit and all particulars.
KRISTEE MANUFACTURING CO., 923 Bar St., Akron, Ohio

Here's an Amazing New Business THAT PAYS UP TO $1,000 A MONTH

A SURPRISING new profit opportunity is now offered to every ambitious man and woman! A sensational new kind of food business has been invented that can be operated by anyone in either full or spare time. Now, almost incredible as it may sound, $400 to $1000 a month is possible in even the smallest cities!

We supply you with equipment and plans for making and selling a delicious new greaseless doughnut that is cooked in a remarkable electrical device. Easy to digest and more toothsome than old-style doughnuts ever were. This delicious new dainty—Brown Bobby—costs less to make and sells four times as fast. No wonder so many people without one bit of experience are literally cleaning up fortunes with this new moneymaker.

You can open a shop; rent cheap floor space in a grocery, delicatessen, lunch counter, drug store, etc. Or start at home—and make good profits your very first week!

$3,000 in 3 Months
"I made $3,000 in 3 months from my greaseless doughnut business."
Thos. Minch, Fla.

Men and women start in this business daily. You cannot afford to delay. Details will gladly be sent without obligation of any sort. Such an amazing moneymaker may never be offered you again. Write at once for full plans and details.

Food Display Machine Corporation
Dept. 333, 500-510 No. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.

Need $500?

Send Me Your Name

I'LL SHOW YOU HOW TO GET IT!

If you can use $100, $300 or $500, send me your name at once. I'll show you how to get the money you need for new clothes, new furniture, a radio, etc. You can start right in. You don't have to take any course of training. You don't need any experience. I'll give you a chance to make as much money as you want. All you do is follow a few simple instructions. Eugene Ducat did as I told him and made $45 clear profit the first 2 days. Mrs. Pearl Kelley has cleared as high as $26.23 in *one* day. Of course, some of my people make more than others. But these big earnings of a few of my Representatives show the wonderful opportunity that is waiting for you.

$125 in a Single Week

The chance to make big money is waiting for you. Will you accept it? I tell you just what to do. Your part is simply to call on your neighbors and my established customers in your locality and take care of their orders for my fast selling line of Groceries and other Household Necessities. Van Allen did this —and reported making as high as $125 in a single week. Gustav Karnath cleared $20.35 the first 5 hours. Nor [illegible] never fails to make $18 to $20 a day. How long will it take you to make $500 at this rate? I don't say that everybody can do as well as these men and women, but their splendid success PROVES what unusually big money can be made.

FREE! NEW FORD Tudor Sedan

NOT a contest. I offer a brand-new car free to producers as an extra reward or bonus—in addition to their large cash profits. Mail coupon for particulars.

SEND NO MONEY

Just send me your name so I can show you how to get started. There's no red tape or delay. I furnish complete information without cost or obligation to you. Your own home will be your headquarters. You set your own hours and work as you please—full time or spare time. So don't delay getting started. If you want $500 for pleasant work get the facts at once. This opportunity is too good to miss. Mail coupon today—sure.

MAIL THIS NOW!

Albert Mills, Pres., American Products Co.,
5541 Monmouth Ave., Cincinnati, Ohio.

Tell me about your wonderful new proposition that offers a chance to make $500—in full time or spare time. Also explain your Free Ford Offer.

Name .....

Address .....

.....

© A. P. Co. (Print or Write Plainly)

START to PLAY Very First Day!

Pleasant, Easy Lessons Show You How!

Extra Money—Hosts of Friends—Loads of Fun Within Your Reach

HAPPY DAYS are in store for you if you will only act on this suggestion! Cheery evenings playing catchy music alone or with sweetheart, wife or sister; proud moments as *center of interest* at gatherings; nights of joy making $5 to $25 for work that is "play."

The Deagan Xylorimba is your opportunity! Wonderful for home, in demand at dances and entertainments, *yet easiest of all instruments to play*. No teacher necessary—you actually play simple melodies the very first day even if you cannot read a note of music right now!

Earns $60 a Week—Ralph Smith, Chicago, says: "Played 20 minutes at wedding. Received $20." L. E. Hallmann, Reading, Pa., writes: "Made $300 in 5 weeks, spare time. Had never played instrument before."

Send for Big Free Book! Our new book tells all about the delightful lessons furnished with each instrument, the five-day trial that removes risk, the wonderful Deagan easy-payment plan. No obligation—simply fill in and mail the coupon.

J. C. Deagan, Inc., Dept. 1863, 1770 Berteau Avenue, Chicago

Send me, without obligation, full details of Free Trial offer and easy-payment plan of the Deagan Xylorimba.

Name .....

Address .....

WHAT EVERY ELECTRICIAN WANTS TO KNOW!

is easily found in AUDELS NEW ELECTRIC LIBRARY. Electricity made simple as ABC. Up-to-date, trade dope for the expert and ALL electrical workers.

Questions, answers, diagrams, calculations, underwriter's code; design, construction, operation and maintenance of modern electrical machines and appliances FULLY COVERED. All available at small cost, easy terms. BOOK-A-MONTH service puts this NEW information in your hands for 6c a day. Write TODAY for Electric Folder and FREE TRIAL offer.

Theo. Audel & Co. 65 W. 23rd St. New York, Dept. 22

U. S. Government JOBS

$1260 to $3400 a year

STEADY WORK
PAID VACATION

MEN—WOMEN
18 to 50

Many 1930 Appointments

VALUABLE COUPON

Mail it Today
SURE

Franklin Institute, Dept. G 191
Rochester, N. Y.

Rush to me FREE OF CHARGE, list of U. S. Government jobs now obtainable. Send FREE 32 page book telling salaries, duties, hours, etc. Tell me how I can get a position.

Name.....

Address.....

FREE To Men Past 40

A WELL-KNOWN scientist's new book about old age reveals facts which, to many men, will be amazing. Did you know that two-thirds of all men past middle age are said to have a certain seldom mentioned disorder? Do you know the frequent cause of this decline in health?

Common Old-Age Symptoms

Medical men know this condition as hypertrophy of the prostate gland. Science now reveals that this swollen gland—painless in itself—not only often cheats men of health, but also bears on the bladder and is often directly responsible for sciatica, backache, pains in the legs and feet, frequent nightly risings, and dizziness denoting high blood pressure. When allowed to run on it is frequently the cause of the dreaded disease cystitis, a very severe bladder inflammation.

65% Have This Gland Disorder

Prostate trouble is now reached immediately by a new kind of home treatment—a new, safe hygiene that goes directly to the gland itself, without drugs, medicine, massage, lessons, diet or the application of electricity. It is absolutely safe. 50,000 men have used it to restore the prostate gland to normal functioning. The principle involved in this treatment is recommended by practically all the physicians in America. Amazing recoveries are often made in six days. Another grateful effect is usually the immediate disappearance of chronic constipation. Usually the entire body is toned up. These results are guaranteed: Either you feel ten years younger in six days or the treatment costs nothing.

Send for FREE Book

If you have this gland trouble or if you have any of the symptoms mentioned above, you should not lose a day in writing for the scientist's Free book, "Why Men Are Old at 40." It will enable you to ask yourself certain frank questions that reveal your true condition. Every man past 40 should make this test, as insidious prostate disorder often leads to surgery. This book is absolutely free, but mail coupon immediately, as the edition is limited. Address

The ELECTRO THERMAL COMPANY
7627 Morris Ave., Steubenville, Ohio

If you live west of the Rockies, mail your inquiry to The Electro Thermal Co.
303 Van Nuys Building, Dept. 76-D
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

THE ELECTRO THERMAL COMPANY
7627 Morris Ave., Steubenville, Ohio
Please send me Free, and without obligation, a copy of your booklet, "Why Men Are Old at 40." Mail in plain wrapper.

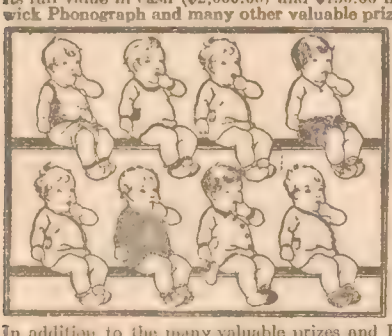
Name.....

Address.....

City.....State.....

Win a Nash Sedan or $2750.00 in Cash

Someone who answers this ad will receive, absolutely free, a fully equipped 7-Passenger, Advanced Six Nash Sedan or its full value in cash ($2,000.00) and $750.00 in cash for promptness. We are also giving away a Dodge Sedan, a Brunswick Phonograph and many other valuable prizes—besides Hundreds of Dollars in Cash for advertising purposes to men, women and children who solve our puzzle and win our prizes. Over $100,000 in Cash and Prizes already given! Mrs. Kate L. Needham won $3,150.00; W. R. Eddington, $3,050.00; Mrs. M. Iverson, $2,320.00. This offer is guaranteed by a big reliable company with a reputation of many years of honest dealings, and is open to anyone living in the U. S. A. outside of Chicago.



Find the Twin Babies

There are eight babies in the picture at left. Two, and only two, are alike. These two are the twins. See if you can find them. The rest are different either in their clothes or in their eyes. When you find the twins, mark them with an "X," tear out the picture and send it to me together with your name and address.

$750.00 Extra for Promptness

In addition to the many valuable prizes and Hundreds of Dollars in Cash we are also giving a Special Added Prize of $750.00 Cash for Promptness to the winner of the Nash Sedan—making a total of $2,750.00 in prizes or cash that you can win. In case of ties duplicate prizes will be awarded each one tying. Solve the puzzle and send it to me right away together with your name and address to qualify for an opportunity to share in the $4,500.00 total Grand Prizes. EVERYBODY PROFITS—you may be the lucky first prize winner. It pays to be prompt.

JOHN T. ADAMS, Manager, Dept. 1423 323 South Peoria Street, Chicago, Illinois

Encouraged by $100

"Perhaps you will be interested to learn that I have succeeded in selling a short story to 'War Birds', aviation magazine, for which I received a check for $100. The story is the first I have attempted. As the story was paid for at higher than the regular rates, I certainly felt encouraged."

Darrell Jordan

Box 277, Friendship, N. Y.

How do *you* KNOW *you can't* WRITE?

Have you ever tried?

Have you ever attempted even the least bit of training, under competent guidance?

Or have you been sitting back, as it is so easy to do, waiting for the day to come some time when you will awaken, all of a sudden, to the discovery, "I *am* a writer"?

If the latter course is the one of your choosing, you probably *never will write*. Lawyers must be law clerks. Doctors must be internes. Engineers must be draftsmen. We all know that, in our times, the egg does come before the chicken.

It is seldom that anyone becomes a writer until he (or she) has been writing for some time. That is why so many authors and writers spring up out of the newspaper business. The day-to-day necessity of writing—of gathering material about which to write—develops their talent, their insight, their background and their confidence as nothing else could.

That is why the Newspaper Institute of America bases its writing instruction on journalism—continuous writing—the training that has produced so many successful authors.

Learn to write by writing

NEWSPAPER Institute training is based on the New York Copy-Desk Method. It starts and keeps you writing in your own home, on your own time. Week by week you receive actual assignments, just as if you were right at work on a great metropolitan daily. Your writing is **individually** corrected and constructively criticized. A group of men with 182 years of newspaper experience behind them are responsible for this instruction. Under such sympathetic guidance, you will find that (instead of vainly trying to copy some one else's writing tricks) you are rapidly developing your own distinctive, self-flavored style—undergoing an experience that has a thrill to it and which at the same time develops in you the power to make your feelings articulate.

Many people who **should** be writing become awe-struck by fabulous stories about millionaire authors and therefore give little thought to the $25, $50 and $100 or more that can often be earned for material that takes little time to write—stories, articles on business, fads, travels, sports, recipes, etc. —things that can easily be turned out in leisure hours, and often on the impulse of the moment.

How you start

We have prepared a unique Writing Aptitude Test. This tells you whether you possess the fundamental qualities necessary to successful writing—acute observation, dramatic instinct, creative imagination, etc. You'll enjoy taking this test. The coupon will bring it, without obligation. Newspaper Institute of America, 1776 Broadway, New York.

Newspaper Institute of America
1776 Broadway, New York

Send me, without cost or obligation, your *Writing Aptitude Test* and further information about writing for profit.

Mr.
Mrs. .....
Miss

Address.....

(All correspondence confidential. No salesmen will call on you.)

99C360

CHELSEA HOUSE

The Brand of *Good Books*

IMPULSIVE YOUTH

By Vivian Grey

She was rich. And he was poor. She gave him up because she didn't want to break his mother's heart, the heart of the woman who had saved and scrimped so that he might go to college and get away from the manual labor that seemed destined for him.

It was an impulsive act, the sort of thing she was always doing, for at the start she had acted on impulse when she left her luxurious home to cast in her lot with the humble folk on the other side of the creek. It was impulse that sent her out at midnight to make her own way in the world, alone, with no money in her purse. And when Phil Rhoades found her and would bring her back, she refused, for she was determined that she would not stand in the way of the career of the man she loved.

In a way, it is true that most of us act on impulse at one time or another, trusting somehow to the hidden voices within us that our actions may be for the best. The author of this absorbing story tells what may happen when we make impulse the guide to life. It is a story of youth in the grip of a great love that is here before us, a book that we do not lay aside until the last page is read, and one that we take up again, for it is well worth the rereading.

75c **75c**

CHELSEA HOUSE PUBLISHERS

79-89 SEVENTH AVE. NEW YORK CITY

BRAND NEW

GENUINE *Model 3*

CORONA

LOWEST PRICE EVER OFFERED

$2.00 DOWN

BALANCE EASY TERMS

HERE'S your chance to own that *brand new* Genuine Model 3 Corona you've wanted—on the easiest terms ever offered—at LOWEST PRICE ever offered! Complete in every detail; back spacer, etc., MANUFACTURER'S GUARANTEE. Recognized the world over as the finest, strongest, sturdiest, portable built. Only a limited number of these splendid machines available. To get one, you must act now!

Yours for 10 Days FREE—Send No Money

Experience the joy this personal writing portable typewriter can give you! Use it 10 days free! See how easy it is to run and the splendidly typed letters it turns out. Ideal for the office desk, home, traveling. Small, compact, light, convenient. Don't send out letters, reports, bills in poor handwriting when you can have this Corona at such a low price or on such easy terms. Remember these are *brand new* machines right out of the Corona factory.

Carrying Case Included—If You Act Now

Leatherold carrying case, oiler, instructions free on this offer. Send no money—just the coupon. Without delay or red tape we will send you the Corona. Try it 10 days. If you decide to keep it, send us only $2—then $3 a month until our special price of $39.90 is paid. Now is the time to buy. This offer may never be repeated. Mail coupon now.

MONEY SAVED
By Using This Coupon

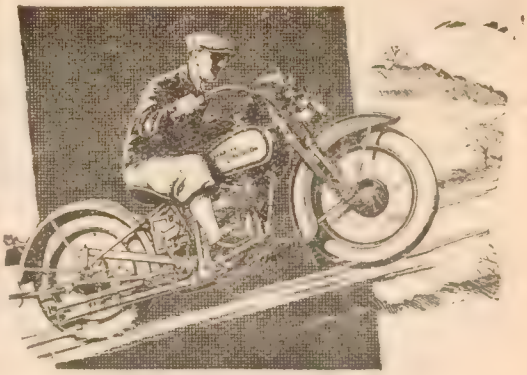
Smith Typewriter Sales Corp.
[Corona Division]
469 E. Ohio St., Chicago, Dept. 193

Ship me the Corona, F.O.B. Chicago. On arrival I'll deposit $2 with express agent. If I keep machine, I'll send you $3 a month until the $37.90 balance of $39.90 price is paid; the title to remain with you until then. I am to have 10 days to try the typewriter. If I decide not to keep it, I will repack and return to express agent, who will return my $2. You are to give your standard guarantee.

*Name*_____

*Address*_____

*Employed by*_____



You Never Tire of It!

EAGER power under instant control — speed that leaves the car-parades behind — lightning response to throttle and brakes — these are just a few of the thousand thrills of motorcycling. Ask any Harley-Davidson rider — he'll tell you of dozens more. They are all yours at low cost, in a Harley-Davidson "45"—the wonderful Twin at a popular price.

Let your dealer show you the 1930 features of this motorcycle — try the comfortable, low-swung saddle — get the "feel" of this wonder Twin. Ask about his Pay-As-You-Ride Plan.

Ride a

Mail the Coupon!
for literature showing our full line of Singles, Twins, and Sidecars. Motorcycle prices range from $235 f. o. b. factory.

HARLEY-DAVIDSON

HARLEY-DAVIDSON MOTOR COMPANY
Dept. S. S.. Milwaukee, Wis.
Interested in your motorcycles. Send literature.

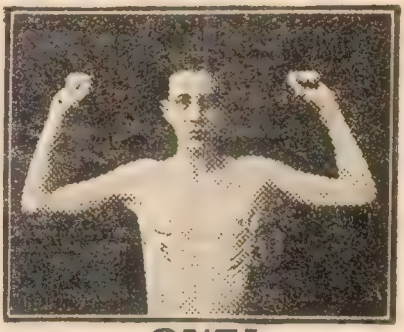
Name_____

Address_____

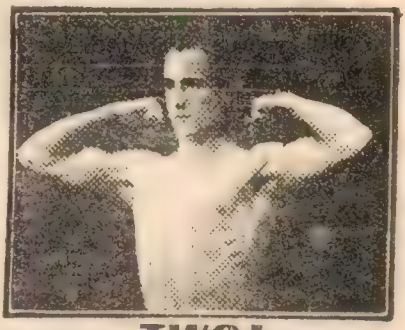
My age is ☐ 16-19 years, ☐ 20-30 years, ☐ 31 years and up, ☐ under 16 years. Check your age group.

YOU'RE NEXT

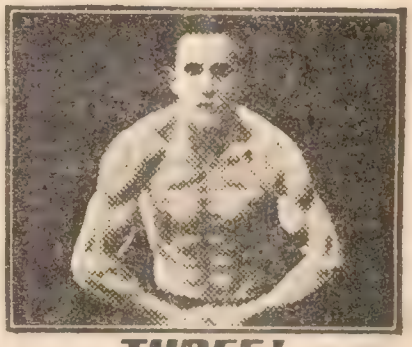
Now Watch YOUR Muscles GROW!



ONE!



TWO!



THREE!

ONE—two—three! Look at those pictures! They show the three stages in building muscles. They show how a puny weakling may be changed into a physical GIANT when muscles are developed **progressively.** It takes SCIENCE to build muscles like that. And that's why Titus Training has accomplished such amazing results for thousands of men. Titus Training develops **every** muscle in the body. It makes muscles GROW. Step by step it builds them up—makes them bigger and bigger—until your whole body is covered with mighty layers of live, solid **strength.**

Come on, friend, you're NEXT. I don't care how weak or how strong you are now—or whether you're 20 or 50. If you are organically sound, Titus Training will work its wonders for YOU.

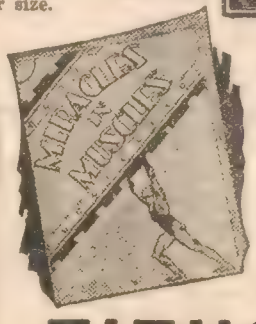
Mail this Coupon TO-NIGHT!

I'll Increase Your Muscles By *INCHES*

Yes, sir, and all I want is 30 days—and just 20 or 30 minutes a day. In that short time I'll put layer after layer of muscle all over your body till they stand out like iron bands. And they'll be panther muscles, friend—muscles as live as spring steel—with the speed of lightning and the power of a battering ram. Those are the kind of muscles that make champions, the kind of muscles that will make you laugh at men twice your size.

Wear This Medal

It's the badge of physical prowess. Strong men all over the world wear it. Made of solid statuary bronze and given to you free.



FREE! Amazing New Book

Tear off that coupon! Mail it today! It will bring you FREE the greatest book you've ever seen—a book filled with astounding photographs of men rebuilt—a book packed full of Titus's own secrets of making muscles grow. No cost or obligation—just rush the coupon to Dept. J-148.

TITUS, Dept. J-148,
853 Broadway, New York, N. Y.

Dear Titus: Sure I'd like to have your book, "Miracles in Muscles." Send it free.

Name .....

Address .....

Town .....State .....

TITUS 853 Broadway, New York City

Boomer

By Robert Ormond Case

Author of "King Cole of Hot Rocks," etc.

WHEN news of the Klondike echoed like a bugle call across the adventurous world, "Boomer" McKearney was bossing a section gang forty miles south of Soapstone on the Santa Fe. Through forty-eight hours of raging impatience he waited and when the replacing foreman arrived, "dead-headed" to Phœnix, he drew out five years' savings from the bank and boarded a train for Seattle.

It was the fall of '97. Less than thirty days had elapsed since the arrival of Klondike gold at San Francisco and first authentic reports of the staggering dimensions of the find; and already a transportation deadlock—forerunner of the greatest stampede of history—was tightening at the gateway to the North. Men begged, bribed, wept, and fought for passage to Skagway; and Boomer bored into the imbroglio, grinning.

Some men are cast in dominant mold. Where others sink, they swim. Where the timorous falter, such a one plunges on. Where weaklings fall, broken and battered, under foot, the dominant one is still on his feet, bellowing. Of such mold was Boomer; and when a strip of muddy sound water, foam-flecked and churned into fury, widened between the *Northern Lights* and the ancient Seattle docks where disappointed hundreds thronged, Boomer was on the forward deck, hip-high in his ton of equipment, the horns of his ferocious mustache

fairly quivering with exultance as he faced toward the North.

Immense in physique as in spirit was Boomer, a swashbuckling, swarthy, jovial, hard-fisted giant of a man. He was young in years, but old in harsh experiences of the frontier. By turns he had been miner, cattleman, "timber beast," and railroad builder. He had tasted the bitter dust of the high desert where vast herds moved insectlike across the face of shimmering dimensions; and in an abrupt shifting of environment had stridden through the greenness, the coolness, and semitwilight of cathedral firs. He had known roaring camps and solitude; battle and comradeship; strong liquor and the smile of women; laughter and tears.

From his crowded experience, Boomer had evolved a philosophy, a code. It shone in the black, reckless eyes of him, echoed in the rollicking notes of his booming voice, was revealed in the flashing of white teeth when his pugnacious features were split in a grin. Life was a genial game in which the stakes were of less importance than the playing; laughter was of more force than tears; the strong were brothers of the weak, and the world, for those who did not take the business of living too seriously, was a wonderful Promised Land whose milk and honey were called adventure.

The things Boomer thought he knew of life were merely the foundation stones of his character, accepted as facts of existence rather than a conscious creed. As he left Seattle he had only the exultant knowledge that he was headed North. The greatest gold strike of a generation beckoned beyond the Alaskan mountains. He and the hundreds that trod the deck beside him—and still other hundreds already pushing blithely into the interior from Skagway and Dyea Beach—were Klondike-bound. A common goal was before them. A common impulse was driving them on. They were, in a manner of speaking, adventurous comrades at arms.

Such was Boomer McKearney as the overburdened *Northern Lights* labored toward Skagway. Such, in so far as he had analyzed life, was his creed. But all this was before he saw The Trail.

Within ten miles of Skagway, before he had left the dismal valley that was already churned into a black and all but bottomless quagmire by countless feet, Boomer's creed was shaken. Before he had reached that point where weary stampeders on the trail looked back to cast a farewell glimpse at tidewater, he knew that he had entered upon a phase of life where all previous standards ceased.

This was the White Pass, deemed by experienced ones to be an easier traverse than frowning Chilkoot. Up and up the trail led, mounting through thunder-built gorges toward the iron peaks, meandering across the face of great precipices, threading giant boulders embedded in muck, crossing and recrossing savage water churned to yeasty foam. Over this insect pathway that pierced the backbone of a continent, the stampeding army toiled in single file; and in the sixty turbulent miles that intervened between tidewater and the windswept barrens that cradled Lake Bennett—birthplace of the mighty Yukon—Boomer saw life in the raw.

To move his ton of equipment, he bought three horses in Skagway. He lost them all before he had reached the bend in the trail that later, and with no sardonic intent, was to be called Inspiration Point. One fell from a cliff, carrying with it two precious bales of hay. Only once in its brief span of life does a horse scream; and the sound of the animal trumpeting into the depths haunted Boomer's dreams for nights thereafter. The second broke its leg on a saw-tooth ledge and had to be shot. The third stumbled in a quaking mo-

rass. Without its pack, it might have floundered through; but its burden was throttling. Boomer labored like a madman to get the equipment to dry ground, but the distended nostrils of the fallen animal had already disappeared beneath the muck.

Because he had loved horses, Boomer was grieved at the loss of these uncomplaining animals. But before he reached the Summit he saw a thousand horses fall. He helped push their scarecrow carcasses from the trail, strode over segments of terrific swamp where the footing was made more secure by their bony bodies stretched like cordwood, and their screams of agony registered upon him with no more touching force than the roar of the mighty torrent below.

More than that Boomer saw, in the fifty-eight days of rain, mud, and gloom between Skagway and Bennett. He saw men fall beside the trail too weak to remove their packs, and no hand was extended to help them. He saw men sitting at the foot of a giant stair, looking toward the heights through eyes blurred with tears of futility and despair. This was the end of their trail; but the shambling column did not halt. He saw old friends become enemies, partnerships break asunder, brother turn against brother. It was as though a species of madness born of the savage environment had entered men's souls, made of them snarling beasts of burden, stripped them of the veneer and sophistries of civilization, and hurled them back a thousand generations into primeval gloom.

It was a mediocre incident that caused the scales to fall from Boomer's eyes. Over some trifling difference of opinion a bellowing argument had broken forth, blocking the trail. It brought the long line to a halt, and human beasts of burden were forced impassively to watch.

Two towering and bearded men, partners whose unwritten contract had survived a dozen years and a score of stampedes, were dividing their equipment. Swept from the record by a word were long days and nights of toil and danger, suffering and hardships together, occasions when each had wagered his resources and his life upon the other's play. On this turbulent threshold of the golden door, their trails had forked.

Item by item, these two checked off their belongings, tossed them in separate piles, glowering. One stove remained, and over this they all but came to blows. Neither would yield his claim to the vital equipment, for the collapsible stove in the barrens beyond the soggy pass meant more than mere comfort. It meant heat and life. Neither would compromise nor agree to a trade. Finally, one spat on his hands and snatched up an ax. The stove crumpled beneath the blow. Viciously he swung upon it, and again. It was divided in two. Each took his half—useless fragments of twisted metal now—and turned his back upon the other. Their separate piles of equipment were now on either side of the trail; and the shambling line, with a grim chuckle, passed between.

"McKearney, me boy," Boomer told himself, "you've been wrong all the while. It's dog eat dog."

Thereafter, having accepted the iron creed, Boomer steeled himself against such weak-kneed emotions as pity, compassion, interest in his fellow man. Sufficient unto a softer clime were such profitless gestures. He must laugh, he told himself, at the heartbreak, despair, and death that paralleled the way; laugh, and stride on. He must raise no hand to help another, lest it imperil his own chances. Here, in the mud and gloom through which men strove toward gold, it was the survival of the fittest. Ancient precepts had been cast aside. Chivalry, sympathy, the social compact,

the gregarious instinct—all the prized glories of enlightened intellect that separated man from the gibbering past—alike lay beyond the mountains.

Snow was in the barrens when Boomer's segment of the stampede army reached Bennett. The freeze-up was imminent. Already shore ice was forming in the gray, wind-swept expanse of gloomy water that swung northward through a jumbled terrain. Mush ice sagged heavily on the chopping waves, and spray froze as it fell. By contrast to the eternal drizzle, the spongelike quality of the world below the summit, the environment here had the bleakness and hardness of the interior country. The sky was blue as polished steel by day, the stars more bold by night, and the blasts of air from the glittering peaks were like keen-edged knives seeking out joints in armor.

Five hundred men who preceded Boomer and four thousand who followed, spent that winter at Bennett. But Boomer pushed on. His was the last flimsy, whip-sawed boat that pushed forth to challenge the terrors of the upper Yukon that storied fall; and from the banks of the freezing lake the timorous, the sagacious, and the envious whose caution was not yet submerged beneath the reckless frenzy that inflamed Boomer, watched him go.

Bets were laid that the maniac Irishman would never reach Dawson. The odds were forty to one as he chopped his way through the shore ice, poling himself forth into the free wind channel. These odds diminished somewhat as he was seen to be making headway in the graying distance, laboring mightily at the oars. The freeze-up was but a matter of hours distant, it appeared, and assuming that he was able to run the savage gantlet of Miles Canyon and White Horse, Lake Laberge would still be before him. And after that, terrific Thirty Mile Canyon.

He was gambling his own life, after all. He was taking no partner with him. As he passed from view of the wilderness encampment in the deepening twilight, men shook their heads and promptly forgot him.

But Boomer's foolhardiness was not founded entirely on sheer recklessness. Why winter at Bennett? His supplies were all but ruined by the insidious dampness and sogginess of the trail. Sacks of flour were mold-incrusted and hard as concrete. Only the core of each sack was now edible. Evaporated fruits were maggoty and worm-eaten. Slabs of bacon were mummified objects of disrepute. It would be folly to winter at Bennett, a gesture of weakness; for his supplies would be gone by spring and he would not yet have seen Dawson. To turn back to tidewater, above all else, would be an admission of defeat.

But mostly his decision was born of the iron that entered his soul, the savage lesson learned from a hostile environment. It was the survival of the fittest. Let lesser men dally at Bennett, cowed by the threat of winter on the turbulent Yukon. Let weak ones shrink from the wagering of their puny lives, or, having essayed the trembling venture, fall by the way. He, Boomer, would push on.

Thus, with his natural blitheness changed by the alchemy of the trail to something more hard and grim, his swashbuckling joviality now a sardonic truculence, Boomer threaded the crackling ice of the lake country below Bennett. Somewhere ahead were the last ranks of the wilderness flotilla, and like a lone, migratory water-fowl left far in the rear, he strove with all his might to catch up.

He had not yet overhauled these rear ranks when he rode down the eddies that poured into rock-bound Miles Canyon. Then came White Horse, whose terrors had already become legend on

the trail. Boomer ran both these savage gantlets with a viking recklessness that was like a kind of fury, passed Lake Laberge by night, where the camp fires of those who had come via Chilkoot twinkled along the frosty banks, so into dread Thirty Mile.

Later chroniclers of the great stampede were to deal lavishly with Miles Canyon and White Horse; and the menace of these barriers needed no exaggeration. But, in point of fact, it was Thirty Mile that claimed the heaviest toll of the rafts, barges, flimsy canvas canoes, and whip-sawed boats that carried the wilderness army toward that material Valhalla of adventurers' dreams that was called the Klondike. Here the turbulent river was compressed into a deep, thunderous gorge more than thirty miles in length, a tortuous channel roaring between high palisades worn smooth by countless ages of erosion. In this channel, death lurked. Like shaggy monsters of the deep gliding upstream, their heads upreared, huge rocks and upjutting crags marred the foaming surface. And in angles of the unyielding walls where the current rolled back to embark upon a new and chaotic course, were silent, glistening whirlpools flanked by treacherous sand bars.

Boomer knew little of these things, except the legends brought back by disheartened ones along the trail. He had passed Miles Canyon and had seen the crosses marking the resting places of voyageurs who had lost their hold on the mane of the White Horse. He knew nothing of the nature of Thirty Mile, and cared less. But others had passed that way.

It was at dawn that he rode down into the canyon, braced against the steering oar. His whip-sawed boat, heavily laden but sturdily constructed, groaned beneath the buffeting of the waves. The dimensions of both boat and oarsman shrank in those mighty depths. They became as one, an insect craft that wallowed in raging troughs, rose up, and scaled foam-lashed crests. An illusion born of giant forces assailed Boomer. It was as though the boat was making no forward progress as it dipped and swooped. It was merely tossing on a vertical plane while sullen walls slid by.

Yet he knew that nothing of illusion surrounded him but grim reality. The insensate walls, clothed at the water's edge in grotesque patterns of spray-born ice, were real. The dangers through which his insect craft threaded were real. There was nothing imaginary about the saw-tooth rocks foaming upstream toward him.

Impaled upon these rocks, in the upper reaches of Thirty Mile, or swaying listlessly to the pull of the current from outjutting crags, Boomer saw many crushed boats and sagging rafts that once had borne men. Some were ice-incrusted, showing that days had elapsed since the trail of some hapless voyageur had here ended. Others were fresh and newly splintered, as though destruction had visited itself upon them but a matter of minutes before. From one disemboweled boat, ropes slanted down, attached still to some nameless burden beneath the sullen current. Of the late owners of these crafts Boomer saw nothing; and he knew that he would see nothing. For here the icy waters were dark and deep, the grim walls unscalable. In some gloomy cavern far below the tossing surface, no doubt, their battered bodies lay; swallowed up in the chill tomb that was the Yukon.

A sneering object lesson, to Boomer's mood, were these monuments to blasted hopes. Eternal vigilance was the price of safety. The slightest relaxation at the steering oar, an instant's carelessness, a momentary loss of mastery over the surging currents, and he, too, would be numbered among the unfit and the missing.

But despite all this—his awareness of his surroundings, his dominant strength and skill as a swift-water boatman—Boomer all but met disaster at a point in lower Thirty Mile all too well known to the unchartered brotherhood of those who saw the Klondike.

The river, at this point, rolled back from a concave wall to plunge through a gap. Below, the channel widened abruptly, then the towering walls converged again upon another cleft. Between these two gaps the current surged, the force of waters piling up in the tossing mid-channel. As at White Horse, safety lay in riding down this crest; for on either side, at the bases of the arching walls, great whirlpools glistened, sullen eddies raced back to join again with the turbulent stream.

Bearing down upon the upper gap, Boomer was forced to swing close to the left bank. A raft was impaled upon the crags at the right, jutting out into the narrow entrance. There was something about this raft suggesting that it had come to grief, but a matter of minutes before. Its lashings had not yet parted at the insistent pull of the current. Tilted at a steep angle, it had shed its human burden and load of equipment, except for one ancient tarpaulin that trailed dankly on the foaming surface.

But Boomer had little time to study and reflect. He hurtled by, cursing the weaklings whose misfortunes had left such a menace at the gap. Midway down the channel, he saw that he could not regain the safety of the crest. With the most Herculean efforts he could not achieve it. He was sliding down. Should he continue on he must hurtle, willy-nilly, upon the rocks of the lower gap. He, therefore, "back-watered" on the left with a fury that bent the stout oar. He swung away from the crest. The savage return rip along the wall caught the boat and flung it back. He was speeding upstream, the whirlpool on his left, the wall at his right.

Crouching at the oars, teeth set and muscles tense, his gaze was fixed upon the point in the channel above where the pendulumlike swing of the whirlpool would hurl him again into the current. It would be a toss-up, he knew, as to whether he could control his boat in that terrific instant when the craft entered the current, reversed its position, and careened up to the crest. Yet, of necessity, he was conscious of the maw of the whirlpool at his left and the speeding wall, which was at his right and at times less than arm's length away. A disturbing of the balanced centrifugal force that held him on the outer edge of the whirlpool, or a crash into the wall, would spell instant doom.

Now Boomer, since leaving the end of the overland trail at Bennett, had seen no human beings but dim figures crouching over wavering fires along the shores of Lake Laberge. He was traveling alone. It was, therefore, with a species of ludicrous amazement that he saw, in a niche in the wall that was speeding toward him on his right, a man clinging like a barnacle.

Only his head was visible above the surface, and one upflung arm whose fingers were outspread against the unyielding rock. It was apparent that the current was holding him against the niche. His back was to the wall, his face turned toward Boomer. It was a bleak, pinched face, blue with cold. His eyes were staring.

Hard on the heels of his amazement, in that photographic instant, Boomer was certain that here was no man of living flesh and blood but a corpse tossed up by some whim of the dark current. Merely to save himself from being sucked into the whirlpool at his left, he swung in closer to the niche. Whereupon the marooned one launched himself forth with a convulsive effort that was as startling as though the cold walls themselves had come to life, and hooked his elbow over the boat.

Boomer's first instant reaction was one of searing rage. The lately marooned one was a little man, yet his frail body, clinging leechlike to the bow, might easily upset the delicate balance of forces in which the boat was caught; and why, according to the iron creed, should this weakling's love of life be permitted to imperil his, Boomer's, chances?

He swung the oar forward like a thrusting lance, placed it against the other's left armpit. But even as he braced himself, an impulse of pity that was a throw-back to softer climes and a weak-kneed past, caused him to hesitate. The little man's gaze was fixed upon him with the unbelieving awe of one who looks back from the threshold of death; and as Boomer hesitated, the other leaned his weight upon the oar. His stiffened fingers closed upon it, as he might have grasped an outstretched hand.

It would have been easy now to thrust him forth. A mere flirt of the wrist would have done the trick. Instead, Boomer, cursing between his teeth, bore down. The oar, fulcrumed across the equipment, heaved the little man in. He fell in the bottom of the boat, floundered like a landed fish, and lay, gasping.

All this in brief seconds of measured time. The boat, having completed the arc of the whirlpool, reëntered the raging channel, mounted up and up to the crest, appeared to stand on end as it caught the full force of the mad current, and, in a dizzy maneuver singularly like the "end for end" of a bucking outlaw, reversed its position without shipping water, and plunged downstream.

Boomer was too busy then and for some minutes thereafter to take note of the little man. Laboring at the oar, he held the careening boat on the crest. Down it hurtled to the gap, plunged through in a smother of foam and so into a long stretch of tortuous channel bristling with a procession of upthrust rocks.

Emerging at last upon a tossing expanse of comparatively calm water, Boomer glowered upon his unwelcome passenger and was enraged anew. During the late hectic interval, the little man had calmly disemboweled a water-proof "turkey" from the stack of equipment, divested himself of his dank clothing, and wrapped his shaking person in his, Boomer's, blankets. Where he had found the reserve of strength for this feat Boomer could not imagine. But there he sat, swathed like a human cocoon, peering forth hopefully upon his deliverer.

"Ye weasel!" said Boomer. "An' what do men call you?"

"C-Crim."

"An' how long was ye roostin' on them rocks back yonder, Crim?"

"C-couple of years, seemed like," chattered the little man. "A half hour, maybe."

"Saints defend us! An' why wasn't you frozen, ye rat?"

"I would have, probably," the little man explained, "except I stayed in the water. I couldn't climb out, anyway. If I had, I'd have frozen stiff as a plank. Mister, I'm pretty tough, but I'm mighty glad you came along. Couldn't have hung on more'n a couple of minutes longer. I got pretty cold, at that. S-seems like I'm never going to get warm any more."

"Ye quakin' half-portion," said Boomer venemously. "Dig down in that blasted turkey and you'll find a pint of squareface. I was savin' it for a better man than you, Crim. Drink, an' may it scorch the shiverin' heart of ye!"

The little man stooped over the receptacle and rose up with the flask. He drew the cork with his teeth, tilted the bottle high. Glaring, Boomer marked the amber level of the fiery liquid recede. The bottle was half empty when

the other lowered it and extended it across the pile of equipment. Boomer drained the flask in huge gulps, gasped under the dynamic impact of the draft, and tossed the receptacle overboard.

"My!" said the little man, drawing his blankets closer about him. "I feel better already."

"Bah!" said Boomer.

How, he wondered savagely, as he bent his attention again to the channel, should he rid himself of this shivering interloper? It was apparent that the other's effects had been lost in the canyon. It had been his raft, no doubt, that had lodged at the gap—the impediment in the channel that had all but caused his, Boomer's, destruction. Contemplation of this fact added further fuel to his wrath. By all laws of the trail, this weakling should have perished. Instead, he had nearly caused the doom of the fit and strong. There he sat now, swathed in borrowed blankets, borrowed life roaring anew through his veins, useless, impotent, without equipment except the dank and stiffening clothing at his feet, assuming without question, it appeared, that his big-hearted deliverer would guard him further against a hostile environment in which he had no right to survive, and safely see him through.

Boomer glared at the misfit, his ferocious mustache bristling, and prepared to deliver an ultimatum; but the little man coughed apologetically.

"Excuse me," he quavered. "I didn't get your name, pardner?"

"Boomer McKearney."

"Well, Boomer," said the little man, "with a gent like you, I probably don't have to say it out loud. But I sure appreciate what you've done for me. I was a goner, back yonder."

"Don't mention it," said Boomer, with sardonic intent. "The pleasure was mine, ye weasel!"

"I'll make it up to you," said the little man earnestly. "You bet I will! Some time or another I'll make it right with you."

"Bah!" growled Boomer.

They emerged from Thirty Mile, drifted by the Hootalinqua and the Cassiar Bar. It was when they swung inshore with the grinding ice below Big Salmon, where the smoke and stench of an Indian village profaned the crystalline air, that Boomer reached a decision. He would make camp and build a fire, so that this weakling parasite he had acquired could dry his clothing. He would fill him with warm food. He would let him sleep in blankets. Then, at dawn, he would cast off and leave him to his own devices. Let him throw himself upon the mercies of the native fish-eaters, or work out his destiny as he saw fit. He, Boomer, would have given him life, set him on firm ground with a chance of survival; and this much was more than the creed set forth.

But when the clothing was dried, the food eaten, and the embers of the camp fire had grown cold, the little man rose up while the starlit gloom of lengthening night was still upon them and bustled about the camp. Boomer had told him nothing of the verdict that would come with dawn; and now, as he reared up from his blankets, scowling, he cursed himself for thus postponing it. For the little man, rejuvenated, refreshed and spry as a cricket for all his terrific experiences, had placed the coffeepot among the glowing embers, and was stacking the equipment in the boat.

"Rise up, Boomer," he exhorted. "It's colder this morning, and we ought to get going. We won't have to make any more stops between here and Dawson. Boy, get wild! We're only three days from the Klondike!"

"We!" growled Boomer. "Listen, ye rat——"

"I can take my turn at the steering oar," said the little man proudly. "Don't forget that. We'll keep on rolling.

Shake a leg, Boomer. It's daylight in the swamps."

Muttering, Boomer rolled out. It was not human to crush the little man's hopefulness and exuberant good spirits. As they ate a hurried meal and stored the duffel away, Boomer strove to gather sufficient moral stamina for the deed. But in vain; and he took up the steering oar, glowering.

Grudgingly, that night, Boomer was forced to admit that Crim, in his weakling way, was possessed of certain sterling qualities at odds with his diminutive physique. Having accepted the hugely irritating conclusion that he could not be rid of his unwelcome companion short of Dawson, Boomer had agreed that each should take his turn at the steering oar while the other slept; with an almost pathetic eagerness to acquit himself well, Crim had insisted on taking the first shift.

Thus, Boomer slept as they drifted with the grinding ice. The river was becoming more massive, more majestic. By comparison, it was no longer turbulent. Yet, in dreams, he plunged again through those savage reaches of the upper river, rode the lashing crest of White Horse, slid down into sullen Thirty Mile. Strangely realistic, these nightmare illusions seemed. It was as though the boat were tossing again in the grip of a lashing tide. He awoke suddenly to blink at strange walls sliding by. He sat up just as the craft emerged as from a long, foaming chute and so into a great cleft where the current was deep, waveless, and swift.

"What was them rapids we just passed, Crim?" he demanded.

"Rink," said the little man.

"Rink!" echoed Boomer. "You're absolutely crazy, man! Five Fingers comes first."

"We passed Five Fingers while you slept," said the little man proudly. "Don't you hold it against my record because I wrecked my raft, Boomer. I'm a white-water boatman. I didn't wake you up. You were tired, so I let you sleep."

The truculence with which Boomer glared at Crim was tinged with awe. In spirit, he had steeled himself against the passage of Five Fingers. While he had slept, the little man had taken them through. With Rink Rapids also behind them, no farther barriers remained in the last stretch to Dawson.

"Figgerin' on payin' your way, eh?" he muttered beneath his breath. "'S all right, me bucko. But don't take any fine airs unto yourself, ye underfed parasite. I can't throw you overboard, an' it ain't in me to put you ashore. But the way I'll shake loose from you in Dawson will be nothin' short of humorous."

Still the threatened freeze-up held off. The Yukon was locking in throes of ice behind them, they knew; but the incoming currents of the Pelly, White, and Stewart Rivers held the channel open. Through a day and a night and another day they drifted, fending themselves from sullen ice floes whose momentum could have crushed their craft like an eggshell; and so, in the deepening twilight of midafternoon, swung around the bend to view of the great, scarred dome that stood guard above Dawson.

Along the bank, in the lee of the current of the Klondike River, an ice pack had accumulated, thrusting far out into the main channel. They hacked and fended through this, penetrating slowly. Fifty feet from the bank, this mass became solid. Across its jumbled surface, laboring like madmen, they portaged the equipment, stacking it among the anthill chaos of activity that was the waterfront of Dawson at the famous freeze-up in '97.

Within an hour after they had dragged the boat ashore, the grinding river shuddered to a halt; and the iron hand of winter closed upon the North.

Turning his back on the equipment, and disregarding Crim utterly, Boomer strode toward the Monte Cristo, palace of refreshment and chance that glittered hard by. For the moment, he told himself, his belongings could rot where they lay. Also, the little man. Affairs of greater moment were at hand.

Exultance roared in his veins, a pagan release of emotions given only to those who have scaled mountains, crossed barrens, pitted their puny strength against a hostile environment, and survived. An urge greater than mere thirst was upon him. Here was Dawson City, fabled metropolis of the North, that had sprung up as at the waving of a magic wand. This was the Klondike, to reach which he and others of the wilderness army crossed a hemisphere. Before him was a rendezvous where the fit and strong foregathered; and Boomer hastened thither, grinning.

Twilight deepened upon the Yukon. The myriad lights of Dawson glittered beneath the high stars. Icy as interstellar space, the chill night tide that was the advance guard of winter stole down from the frozen hills. But within the Monte Cristo, red-bellied heaters roared defiance to the cold, and barbaric cheer was abroad.

Foregathered at the bar with others of the dominant breed, Boomer's voice rose through the robust din. His jovial laugh reëchoed. He saw bulging pokes cast upon the bar and the score weighed out on delicate scales—grain, small nuggets and dust. It was Klondike gold; and he drew forth the last remnants of the cash he had brought in from the outside to pay for another round. As the searing liquor warmed the exultant heart of him, he listened avidly to the tales of those who had come down from the treasure chest above the Forks.

The storied wealth of the Klondike, whose legends had gripped the imagination of two hemispheres, had not been exaggerated, it appeared. No blanks on Eldorado or Bonanza up to the very threshold of the Dome. New strikes had been brought in on dry creek beds which the first frenzied hordes had passed by—Chechahco, Monte Cristo, Big and Little Skookum. Not in millions would the yield of the Klondike be appraised, nor in tens of millions, but in hundreds. It was the greatest placer strike of any age, of all time. And the surface, as yet, had not been scratched. No man could appraise its incalculable limits.

There was another side to this picture of pagan opulence, but Boomer closed his mind to it. All proved creek beds were already staked to the last foot. Old-timers from the Cassiar Bar, the Stewart River, Forty Mile, Sixty Mile, McQuestion, and other wilderness outposts, had rushed in on the heels of Carmack's discovery and staked all promising claims long before the news of the great strike reached the outside. These fortunate ones, in on the ground floor, were the Midases of the moment. But for every man who found gold, there would be hundreds who would not. Already, Dawson was thronged with disheartened men; and what of the frenzied thousands waiting for the spring break-up to converge on the Klondike from all points of the compass?

These things, at the moment, meant nothing to Boomer. What was cold logic to those who had survived the trail and stood at rainbow's end? He was in Dawson. Life roared in his veins like the fire in the red-bellied heater. Sufficient unto the day was the evil thereof. His was the dominant breed. He was of the chosen few. There would be other strikes in the Klondike and he, Boomer, would be there.

It was at a late hour that he turned from jovial conversation with a bearded Crœsus of upper Eldorado to discover that it was Crim who was plucking at his sleeve.

"Let's go," said the little man apologetically. "I've found us a cabin, Boomer."

"Ho, ye weasel!" chortled Boomer, smiting him on the back. "So you found us a cabin, eh?"

"Couple of meat hunters leaving for the mountains," Crim explained, leading the way to the door. "They figger on trading with the Indians for moose and caribou. They said we could have the use of the cabin till they got back. It was sure a break for us. I been scouting around, Boomer. Things are going to be in an awful shape here this winter. Terrible."

"Bah!" said Boomer.

He gasped at the bite of the night air and pulled his mackinaw up about his ears. His breath was a frozen mist whipped away in the wind. The hard-packed snow creaked underfoot. It was the first real cold of the season, with the mercury dropping with each passing minute. Singularly penetrating it was, piercing fold on fold of heavy clothing, seeming to bite way through to the very marrow.

"Heat's first," said the little man. "Grub's next. The old-timers say a lot of these chechahcos will freeze in tents. You know what, Boomer? There's going to be a food shortage here in a couple months. Too many stampeders here. Nothing coming in from the outside. But we'll have a cabin, Boomer. It gives us an edge."

"Listen, ye rat," said Boomer, his senses clearing. "Who dealt you a hand? Where's this cabin?"

The little man pointed. "Way up on the slope."

"To blazes with it!" said Boomer. "Move all that duffel up there in the bowels of the night like this? Too tired, Crim. Roll up in the blankets, by gravy, an' sleep where I hit!"

"I've already moved the stuff up there," said the little man proudly. "And I've got a fire built."

"I'm a blasted goat!" muttered Boomer.

His robust mood fading with the memory of the warmth of the Monte Cristo, he knew again his old rage. Once more Crim had forestalled the application of the creed. While he, Boomer, had dallied at the bar, the little man had found a cabin. On his narrow shoulders, in weary trips, he had moved the equipment thither. He had built a fire and come running hopefully to fetch Boomer home.

He was trotting ahead now to show the way. Boomer followed, glowering. In the frigid twilight they threaded through grotesque dwellings cast up by the stampede army. There were flimsy tents against which the snow was banked, weird structures of slab and driftwood from which stovepipes composed of flattened tin cans projected. Even upturned boats formed cavelike shelters. Lights shone dimly in some of these, strange fires glowed. Fragments of conversation came down with the wind, muffled and bestial; and from all about and far away, the wail of wolf dogs rose in an ancient chorus to the pitiless stars.

"Here we are!" Crim threw open the door, fairly bursting with pride. "Is she a beaut, or isn't she? Two bunks. A real stove. Look at that wood stacked against the wall. When it's sixty below, we'll just sit here and laugh, Boomer. It's the best little old shack in Dawson."

Unwillingly, Boomer was forced to concede that the cabin was indeed a prize. Squat, sturdily constructed, its log walls chinked against cold and frost, the box stove belching heat, it formed a primitive yet comfortable haven which, compared to the hovels and makeshift shelters they had seen on the slope, was a castle.

The little man's eagerness for approval was so manifest that Boomer did not have the heart to deny him praise.

"It'll do," he growled. "Fine work, Crim. How did ye manage it?"

"Persuaded those moose hunters that the cabin would be better off occupied than idle," said Crim. "They got to have the bunks, of course, when they're back between trips. There was only one string attached. They said me and my pardner had to keep up the wood."

"Pardner?" echoed Boomer, glaring.

"Just in a manner of speaking," said Crim, suddenly embarrassed. "They knew we hit town together."

"Humph!" grunted Boomer.

He busied himself with sorting equipment that was stiff and mildewed still from the miasmic gloom of the pass. He hung this paraphernalia on pegs that festooned the well-blistered wall behind the stovepipe. From time to time he glowered askance at Crim, uptilted on a box in the mellow warmth of the corner, hugging his bony knees. The little man fidgeted beneath his gaze.

"I won't have to use your blankets," he said hopefully. "You'll need 'em all when the real cold hits us. There's two bearskins and a tarpaulin in that bunk. They'll do me fine."

Boomer cursed himself for the sudden wave of pity that momentarily pushed his resentment into the background. It might have been the mellowness of mood born of his dallying at the Monte Cristo, or the elemental comfort of the smoke-blackened walls about them while the wind moaned outside. It was probably the vivid imagination with which he was saddled, he told himself, that caused him, in defiance of the iron creed, to look upon the little man in that moment with almost a kindly tolerance. For suppose he, Boomer, were in Crim's shoes? Fit and strong though he was, suppose he had clung to life only through a gesture of fate in grim Thirty Mile, had achieved the Klondike only at a sullen giant's whim, and now found himself without equipment, without resource, without friends, penniless, impotent, face to face with bitter winter in the most hostile environment of a continent?

He shivered involuntarily at the thought; and it was as though an ancient personality spoke against his will.

"We'll get along," he growled. "Yeah, we'll get along."

Beginning the following summer, when river boats had conquered the lower Yukon, bringing in tons of foodstuffs and supplies, when huge warehouses had sprung up to serve the needs of a wilderness metropolis whose population leaped from two to twenty thousand, and the Northwest Mounted Police had established rigid regulations at the summit which required that no stampeder might enter unless accompanied by a year's supply of provisions, the specter of wholesale starvation was seen no more in the Klondike.

But that winter there was near-famine in Dawson.

It was in the very nature of things that this should be so. Without adequate preparation, and intent only on passing the golden door, the advance guard of the frenzied horde had rushed in. Cut off from the outside, and with the winter trail to tidewater not yet established, there was simply not enough food to go around; and all the wealth of Eldorado and Bonanza could not be translated into such humble and vital things as flour, beans, and bacon.

Surplus supplies from wilderness trading posts up and down the frozen river were sledded in, but these were meager compared to the demand. Hunters and meat-traders foraged into the interior for a hundred miles, but Indian tribes who knew the winter feeding grounds of the moose and caribou had withdrawn still farther into the wilds and the catch was small. Food speculators flourished buzzardlike on the needs of the community. Prices soared fabulously.

To those on the inside—the Midases of Eldorado and Bonanza, the gold barons of the pay creeks, the proprietors of saloons, dance-halls, gaming houses and other business establishments—the food gravitated according to the inevitable law of supply and the wherewithal to pay for it. But upon the outer fringe of humanity, as winter advanced, the legion of adventurers who had neither food nor gold, the brunt of the rigorous interval fell.

Of this outer fringe were Boomer and Crim. At first, plunging carelessly into the swirl of things, his judgment blunted by the glitter and pagan opulence of this Rome of the wilderness, Boomer failed to read the handwriting on the wall. He moved with boisterous throngs in the crowded palaces of amusement, refreshment, and chance, fascinated by the gold that flowed in ceaseless streams about him. He spent days at the creeks, where the thawed gravel from bedrock was being brought to the surface and dumped in treasure-laden piles against the spring clean-up. He joined a stampede to the banks of a nameless and frozen watercourse beyond the Dome, sank a shaft through the frozen muck; but it proved a blank. Boomer was not disheartened, but the hope, excitement, and Titanic toil of the profitless interval served to blind him to a certain elemental show-down that was approaching in his affairs.

Came a day when he checked over his provisions and cursed in amazement. In far-off, rain-swept Seattle, before he had begun his assault on the North, he had planned ample resources to last until spring. He had known that much of the perishable foodstuffs had been ruined on the trail. He knew that during the two months that had elapsed since achieving Dawson he had thrown out more unfit provisions than he had eaten. He had not realized, so blinded had he been in the dizzy swirl of things in the great roaring metropolis, how vast these inroads had actually been.

Now he saw, as he checked over the mildewed flour falling from the rotting sacks, segregated the bacon that was yet fit for use, and pawed among worm-eaten husks that had once been beans and evaporated fruits, that the end of the trail, so far as his present supply of food was concerned, was but a matter of days distant.

His sole reaction, at the moment, was a vast and somber irritation. It was directed at the fact alone and not with the bleak prospect that might lurk beyond that moment when the food was gone.

Crim was responsible for this dilemma, Boomer told himself savagely. Or, rather, he himself was responsible. Had he not, in a weak-kneed and incomprehensible fashion, permitted the little man to share his provisions during the past months the food might have lasted. Short rations, perhaps, for one, never for two. Alone, he could have held out until spring. Now, in midwinter, because he had played fast and loose with the iron creed by allowing the impotent and indigent Crim to fasten himself like a parasite upon him, he was approaching an elemental bed rock.

Deep in his heart, as he thus condemned Crim, he knew that the little man had struggled mightily to pay his way. With a species of half-tolerant amusement he had marked the weakling's battle with a harsh environment suited only to the fit and strong. During the previous months, while he, Boomer, had strode on his swashbuckling and careless way, the little man had striven desperately to gain a foothold in the economic scheme of the Klondike.

Boomer had seen him, on occasion, "swamping out" saloons where towering and dominant ones foregathered. Returning through a half blizzard from the creeks, he had encountered Crim stumbling through the swirling gloom, bowed

in the sled harness, fetching down wood from the higher slopes so that the red-bellied heaters could roar on where lights were bright, belch forth heat for the comfort of those upon whom the gods had smiled. He had seen him perform other menial tasks; and from all of these he had come trotting hopefully back to the cabin with the can of "salt horse," the handful of questionable beans, or the pound of ever precious flour that represented the fruits of his labor.

But more and more often, as the grip of famine tightened with the advance of winter, Crim had returned disconsolately to hover over the stove, his ragged mustache drooping. There was scant work to be had, and when fifty burly ones with tightened belts were baying like wolves on the slightest clew of labor, the little man was brushed aside. On these occasions, with a jovial gesture, Boomer had invited Crim to sit up and eat. Crim had done so, apologetically, and though he had not demolished the food with Boomer's viking appetite, these barren stretches had endured for days at a time.

Now, counting the cost for the first time, Boomer was enraged. Little as Crim had eaten, his own resources had been depleted in like amount. It was not Crim's fault. A drowning man will always clutch at a straw. To those who are hungry, the source of food is of little moment. But his, Boomer's, temporary forgetfulness of the iron law, his jovial generosity that had been a throw-back to an ancient and easy-going past, had now reduced him to the same economic status as the weakling Crim.

Even then, with the end of his food supply but a matter of days distant, Boomer did not face ultimate truths. Because he was careless by nature and unafraid, confident of his ability to survive if there was any surviving to be done, and habitually prone to postpone the crossing of any rivers until the ford was at his feet, it was without apprehension and merely with wrathful impatience that he turned grumblingly to the problem.

Nor did he deny any of the remaining food to Crim. Too late now to become niggardly and foresighted. Let the weakling eat while there was food to be had for the asking. The little man would learn soon enough what it meant to be thrown entirely upon his own resources. Then, with every man for himself, he must stand on his own legs, or fall.

Thus Boomer went forth, scowling, to join the indigent ranks that swarmed on the side lines of the golden stream. Almost immediately he realized, with a species of shock similar to plunging headlong into a stone wall, that while he had dallied with other affairs, the economic scheme of things in the Klondike had fallen into certain fixed and unyielding grooves.

Around every job, or slightest clew or inkling of a job, scores of men circled like wolves. Their desperate intentness was grimly humorous to Boomer, at first. Later, as he analyzed its significance, it was appalling. For he, Boomer, had several days' food left. He had, in gambling parlance, an ace in the hole. But these men, having long since passed Boomer's status, were living from hour to hour.

Still he refused to worry. He was shocked, but not disheartened. He went the rounds, using his active imagination and knowledge of other frontier camps to seek out possible markets where brawn could be exchanged for the wherewithal to buy food. But in each instance he discovered that others, long since, had beaten a path before him. He ranged farther afield, roaming through Klondike City, circled the pay creeks to remote Upper Eldorado and the Big Skookum; but this long and futile trek merely used up more energy and caused

further vast inroads into the questionable remaining food at the cabin.

Thus, by definite stages, Boomer approached bed rock. Came an evening when Crim mixed the sour dough that had been husbanded so carefully from day to day on the warm shelf beside the chimney, mixed the last of the flour in the can, and emptied the whole in the griddle. The flimsy cake thus produced was divided in half. The ancient bacon rind used to grease the griddle was divided in half. These delicacies demolished, Boomer glowered across the empty griddle at Crim, and the little man peered back dejectedly. Their food was gone.

Boomer chuckled aloud in sardonic mood as he turned in that night. Life was a game, after all. To-morrow a species of show-down was approaching; and his were the dominant cards with which to call, to raise, to win. On the morrow he would tighten his belt and sally forth to take his place among the savages, in the front ranks of the circling wolves. If there was a job in prospect, it would be his. If there was food to be had, it would be he that would be filled. In a game of wits and brawn, where dog ate dog, the strong survived and darkness overtook the hindmost, he, Boomer, held the winning hand.

But he did not rise up on the morrow to stride with tightened belt among the ranks of the savages. In the depths of the night a nameless malady born of the pitiless environment fastened itself upon him and he was stricken where he lay. At first, he writhed on his bunk, wrestling as with disordered dreams. Later, it was as though his veins were turned to fire, and wave on wave of nausea hurled him, reeling, into shuddering depths. Perspiration poured from him between each tortured crisis. He caught fragmentary pictures of sight and sound. A blizzard was thundering through the blackness of the night outside. Crim was standing over him, impotently wringing his hands. Then sight and sound ceased; and at dawn he was tossing in delirium.

It might have been the chemistry of questionable food and the short rations of the previous days that had wreaked terrific havoc upon him. It might have been outraged laws of living born of the arrogant carelessness of the strong that had claimed its toll. Boomer neither knew nor cared. In lucid moments he had only the staggering knowledge that the mighty physique and iron constitution that had carried him through roaring camps and crowded years had here failed.

Blurred and indistinct were remembered fragments of the ensuing interval. There were days and nights, merging one into the other. He saw Crim stoking the fire, his pinched features ruddy with reflected light, his ragged mustache drooping. He saw Crim shoveling snow away from the threshold, working furiously while wave on wave of cold poured through the open door to assail the warmth of the cabin. He bellowed at the spectacle of the little man's frenzied effort; but was amazed at the knowledge that no sound issued from his cracked lips.

And again, by night, he saw Crim garbed as for a long trip. He bulged strangely with much clothing. Huge mittens were on his hands. He was muffled and swaddled so that only his ragged mustache was visible as he stood peering toward Boomer's bunk. His bearing was that of one torn by indecision. It was more than mere indecision, Boomer sensed through the mists. It was a terrific struggle between conflicting forces of reason and impulse. It was, somehow, not good to look upon, for the little man was not at all conscious of being watched; and Boomer closed his eyes, pretending still to be in a coma.

When he awoke, his senses clearing

for the first time since he had fallen, it was dawn. White frost was thick upon the blankets about his chin. The fire was out. The cabin was unutterably cold; and he was alone.

Boomer was wide awake; his perceptions sharpened as though miasmic fog had rolled away. Objects stood out in bold relief in the gray half-twilight within the cabin. He could see the snowshoes of the moose hunters hanging on the wall and count each web. He could see the rough, uneven contour of the floor, and the empty griddle on the hearth. He could hear the hopeful snuffling of wolf dogs about the threshold, marked the faint slithering of snow as they whirled and snarled among themselves, heard the *pad-padding* of their feet as they trotted away. Men's voices came from a distance, and from still farther in the unseen remoteness of the world came tiny shreds of pagan music, the tinkle of bells, laughter and shouts.

But these latter things, he knew, were separated from him as by the space between stars. This cabin was his world, shut off from unheeding life. No man would turn aside to enter here. Who knew that he, Boomer, was down? Or cared? Crim was gone. Within these four walls he must face ultimate truths, alone.

Methodically, he appraised his status. His malady was gone, apparently. He was in no pain, save for a vast, aching, gnawing emptiness that he knew was hunger. He had lain here helpless for days. His tough physique had conquered the sickness, but at terrific cost. Now he was starving, with a devastating, wolfish starvation such as had never before touched his life.

He strove to sit up. The effort was too great and he relaxed with a sigh. He was amazed at his weakness, but proceeded methodically to appraise that fact with relation to his chances of survival. He was well now, but too weak to move. To acquire food, he needed strength. To acquire strength, he needed food. There was no food, and he had no strength.

He assayed a feeble, sardonic grin. That was logic and no mistake. Yet he felt no fear. Facts were facts.

"Looks like the homestretch," he told himself. "But keep a stiff upper lip, Boomer, me lad, till the last dog's hung. What else?"

The coldness of the cabin was beyond all previous experience. Twenty-four hours had elapsed, no doubt, perhaps more, since Crim had taken his departure for more promising realms. He did not blame Crim, he assured himself. Rats desert a sinking ship. When he, Boomer, was down, and there was no food left, his usefulness to the little man was done. Crim had known that upon his departure the fire would die in the stove, and that on the heels of the dying fire the insidious frost would enter the sturdiest of walls. With the coming of frost, the feeble life fires in the prostrate one would in all probability sink low, flicker into embers, and die. If not, he would starve to death. And what of it?

But he did not blame Crim, he insisted stubbornly. Why should the little man hold vigil beside a fallen giant if his own interests lay elsewhere? It was only the ruthless application of his own accepted code. It was the law of survival, of self-preservation, the iron creed.

He drew a barren satisfaction from a grimly humorous thought. He had fooled Crim in one particular. He had been tougher than the little man had suspected. Frost had entered the cabin, but within his wasted bulk life-flames had burned dimly on. The cold evidenced by the glittering crystals that stood out on the rafters and walls and glistened on the hearth, that had bulged the surface of the water bucket upward in a convex mass of solid ice, had

merely wakened him from his sleep of exhaustion and weakness.

But even now, as he reflected, he could feel inner fires growing low. The resistance that had enabled him to live and waken was not sufficient to carry him on. His undernourished body was incapable of generating sufficient heat to fight off the inexorable frost. Despite the weight of blankets, his limbs were clammy and chilled. Exposed portions of his face tingled as to the bite of myriad needles.

First, then, he must devise some means of keeping warm. All else, including an appraisal of his further chances, must wait.

He peered at the stove, and beyond to Crim's late bunk where the brace of bearskins lay. He closed his mind to the possibility that there might not be sufficient reserves of strength remaining in his great torso to enable him to crawl forth from the bunk. It must be done. But having done so, could he withstand the withering cold long enough to build a fire? Or should he seize upon a bearskin and return with all haste, trusting to the additional covering to conserve and build up his bodily heat?

He decided on the latter course, and grimly marshaled all his resolution for the attempt.

With a prodigious effort, he sat up. He gasped at the deluge of icy air that instantly engulfed him, and rolled to the floor. He rose to hand and knee. Vertigo seized him and he crouched thus for a moment until his senses cleared. Then, teeth set, he rose up and lurched forward.

He reached Crim's bunk, laid hold of the bearskin. It was heavier, far heavier, than he thought. His knees doubled beneath him at the effort, but as he fell, he dragged the huge pelt with him. He tried to rise up and failed. Crabwise, he inched himself across the floor, his movements becoming slower and slower, like a ponderous machine running down.

He achieved his bunk and raised up the pelt. Fold on fold he raised it up, holding what he had gained with his shoulder and raising yet another fold. At last it was disposed, covering his blankets; and Boomer knelt thus, his elbows resting on the edge of the bunk, searching in his very soul for the strength to heave himself up and gain the shelter he had prepared.

Curiously like Crim he was, on that occasion back in sullen Thirty Mile when the little man's elbow had been hooked over the edge of the boat. Chilled, too, Crim had been, and exhausted. Acting on weak-kneed and jelly-fish impulse, he, Boomer, had helped him in; and he was filled with bitterness now as he thought of it. For in his own present extremity, in this reeling moment when each passing second was ticking him into eternity, there was no outstretched hand to help him. Crim, whom he had saved, was now gone.

Slowly he raised himself up, bending forward, bracing himself on straddled feet. He collapsed on the bunk and struggled on, insinuating his body under the blankets. They covered his body, his chest, the soft hair of the bearskin tickled his chin. Still, he burrowed deeper, retreating from the cold as into a shell, until darkness enveloped him and he was completely covered.

He relaxed, then, utterly spent by his efforts; and it was as though only the heart of him was warm and alive and all the rest of him was chilled and senseless.

He slept and dreamed, but his dreams were not of the cold. They were all of food—food in infinite variety and prodigious quantity—and he sampled it all, gloating. Strangely realistic, these crowded images were; yet always, invariably, he fell just short of realization; and the very beauty of the illu-

sions only sharpened, by contrast, the great bitterness of frustration and defeat.

He rode, in dreams, through a sun-drenched Oregon valley. It was in harvesttime when the first glorious apples were ripe on the bough. He pulled up beneath the heavily laden branches, relaxed in the saddle, and extended his hand in a lazy and regal gesture. Apples were there for the taking, huge, gorgeous apples, crimson-cheeked and soul-satisfying, their pulp firm and juicy. He plucked them down and rode away. His pockets bulged; his saddlebags bulged; he carried one behemoth in his hand and ate. He ate them all, one by one; emptied the saddlebags. He was full, he told himself. He must be, for he had eaten at least a half bushel.

But presently the sun-drenched valley was left far behind and he was riding through a desert, hungrier than before.

He was squatting around the chuck-wagon fire, beneath the stars. To his right and left were other wranglers, all eating. He was eating, too, with a vast and ferocious appetite. A huge beefsteak was on the tin plate at his feet, a wondrous beefsteak, thick, juicy, and delectable. He demolished it, and seized upon another. There were plenty, stacked high like hot cakes. He buttered a biscuit hot from the pan, and another. No question about it, the Lazy Z had a cook! Match this, wranglers. Three beefsteaks, each a full, round cut. A dozen biscuits. A quart of hot coffee. Was he faded? They shook their heads in grinning awe. Here was a meat-eater, no doubt of it; a hungry man who had been filled.

And as he mounted and rode into the enveloping darkness where there was no chuck-wagon, nor wranglers, nor herd, it was as though he had not eaten at all and the very heart of him screamed for food.

From image to image he passed in aching dreams. He stood in a stately hall where the myriad lights of a chandelier were reflected in snowy damask, in the sheen of silver and the sparkle of cut glass. He ate until liveried menservants bearing new platters of food stood in column formation at his back, and distinguished company eyed him in well-bred but supercilious astonishment; and again, in the jungles of hobo land, he squatted on his haunches and gnawed huge bones.

He was on the banks of the Yukon, below Big Salmon, when he had put ashore to feed Crim and dry his clothes. Eat hearty, ye weasel, there's plenty of food! He was in the cabin, where the heater roared, gouging out the heart of the hard-packed flour, mixing it with the sour dough. Biscuits were on the table, and beans. Drag up your chair, ye rat! Don't haunt me with your hungry looks. There's plenty for two—— And again, he was eating the half of that last bacon rind, extricating the last iota of nourishment from it. It was good. It was gone. What now, ye weakling?

Boomer woke, in darkness. He pulled down the covers and peered upon the shadowed cabin. As the cold stung his eyeballs, bleak realities registered upon him. He disposed the blankets so that they protected his head, leaving only his eyes uncovered. He was spent with the effort and lay, quivering.

The wind was sighing at the eaves in a dreary sound curiously expressive of the unutterable cold of the iron peaks. Particles of snow rattled across the roof. The distant wail of wolf dogs rose to the pitiless stars. There was something about this pæan of protest, the inarticulate revolt against facts of existence voiced by these four-footed exiles of the wild, that was akin to the torture within Boomer. These dogs were likewise starving. Their protest was his protest. But they, starving, would live on, being creatures of their

environment, and roaring in packs; while he, Boomer, would die, being alone.

Yet, his reason having accepted this fact, the stubborn unyielding soul of him sought out a last protecting barrier and there took its stand. This barren cabin, his present extremity, the whole pitiless environment that had risen against him, might all be a dream. It would not be in the least astonishing, he told himself, if fire should suddenly roar in the heater, or the empty table groan beneath steaming food. Or if Crim should stroll in nonchalantly, festooned with provisions. He would pay no attention to such illusions, he told himself. They would be part and parcel with other fantasies of the past. He would wake up presently, out on the Oregon range, or in the camps, or the section-gang bunk house at Soapstone. But man, man, how he would eat when he woke up!

Hours passed. The wind sighed on. The half twilight that was upon the world had deepened into shadow when an alien sound came from the night outside. It was neither the wind nor the wolf dogs. It came from the threshold, a deep, hoarse breathing as though here one had paused to rest.

The door opened presently, bursting inward before a blast of air icier than the unbelievable cold of the cabin. A little man stumbled in, bowed beneath a gunny sack, half-filled, that was slung across his shoulder. He dropped his burden and swayed back toward the door. He leaned against it, closed it. The latch clicked. Whereupon he sagged still lower, as though his knees had given way beneath him. He sat thus upon the floor, his mittened hands beside him, head bowed.

Because anything can happen in dreams, as Boomer was well aware, he was not in the least astonished to observe that the little man was Crim.

Dreams can be amazingly realistic in detail, Boomer also knew. Nevertheless, with a species of detached curiosity, he studied Crim's appearance.

The little man's bearing and garb were those of one who has barely emerged from a terrific battle with cold, snow, and exhaustion. Snow had lodged in every fold and crevice of his clothing. Where his breath had played, was ice. The muffler that protected the lower part of his face was ice-incrusted his ragged mustache was stiff. Exposed portions of his features were powdered with unmelted snow. Slumped against the door, he might have been a lifeless, swaddling, frozen mummy of a man, but for his heavy breathing, and the glistening of his eyes beneath the protecting visor and flaps of his cap.

His gaze was turned toward Boomer's bunk with the unwinking intensity of one who fears to look. Through the slit in the blankets, Boomer peered back. Then Crim roused a little.

"Boomer!" he quavered. "Man, are you alive?"

"An' why not, ye rat?" Boomer croaked in return. To himself he added: "Keep a stiff upper lip, me bucko, he'll not haunt ye long."

"Gosh!" breathed Crim. He relaxed, head thrown back. His eyes were closed, and Boomer noted that even his eyelashes were white with frost. "Figured maybe you were frozen stiff, Boomer. It turned cold, awful cold. Sixty below, outside."

"Then it's fifty here," said Boomer. "An' you'll most certainly freeze where you sit."

"No, I won't," the little man denied. "Just resting a minute. Kind of—all in. Didn't know whether I'd make it or not. But I did. You bet I did, Boomer. You can hold on a while longer, eh?"

"For days, if need be," boasted Boomer. "Till you're gone again, ye weasel!"

"But I'm not going," said the little

man. "You know what I got in that sack, Boomer? Grub! Enough for days and days." His voice quavered with triumph. "And that isn't all of it. We're over the hump. But I'll tell you all about it later. Going to build a fire first. You bet I am. Then we'll eat."

"Sure we'll eat." Boomer whispered the words, bitterly, wistfully, in utter disbelief; for the memory of apples in a sun-drenched valley overwhelmed him, and beefsteaks at a chuck-wagon fire. "But will we be filled?"

He closed his eyes, so that this illusion would pass. He heard the little man stumbling about the cabin, heard the stove rattle, and the striking of a match. He cursed himself for listening so avidly to these audible fantasies; but it was as though his quivering ears were thirstily drinking up each sound. Silence came. He held his breath, and above the little man's heavy breathing came an echo from an infinitely remote and unattainable past. It was the roaring of fire in the stove, and the crackling of burning wood.

Again, Crim was stumbling about. He went outside, and Boomer heard him gasping like one in pain. What now, he wondered? The stumbling steps returned and Boomer opened his eyes.

"Frostbite," said the little man apologetically, wiping his glistening face. "Rubbed it out with snow. It burns, so it's O. K. Just a second now, Boomer. First, we'll have some soup. Red hot. Couple quarts apiece as an appetizer. Then some moose meat. Euchered him out of a slug of sour dough. Got it in a can—and some flour. Pork and beans next. Man, man, we'll live like kings——"

The cabin was becoming noticeably warmer. Beneath his mountain of bedding Boomer was stifling. He battled upward, uncovering his face; and was assailed by seductive and maddening aromas from griddle and bubbling pot. He all but groaned aloud as he turned his face away. No other of the legion of nightmare fancies relating to food had been so realistic as this.

"Up and at 'em, Boomer," the little man chortled presently. "Have you the strength to eat at the table? Look, I've got the chair fixed."

"I'll call you," said Boomer, between his teeth. "Help me up, ye weasel."

He felt giddy, light-headed. The cabin swam about him. He was sitting at the table in the crude high-backed chair of the moose hunters, swathed in a blanket. Crim sat opposite, hollow-eyed, his emaciated cheeks shrunken, his ragged mustache quivering with exultance.

Steaming bowls of soup were before them. Flapjacks were stacked high. At Crim's elbow, on the hearth, were pork and beans hot from the can. Strips of moose meat were sizzling in smoking grease; and in that moment, such was the frailty of flesh, Boomer would have sold his soul for the realities these illusions represented.

It was when the bowl was half empty that Boomer became aware, against the most stubborn insistence of his reason, of a miraculous and stupefying fact. In dreams he had eaten before, with the same voracious appetite, the same wolfish enjoyment. But always before, having eaten, the aching void that was the very soul of him had clamored on, unappeased.

Now it was no mere gesture of eating. He swallowed the searing liquid. It scorched his palate. And it was as though, within him, ravenous wolves of hunger that had lain sullen and dormant through tortured æons, leaped up, bellowing.

It was food. The knowledge of it shook him to the depths. No nightmare illusion, no ephemeral dream visited upon him by sardonic gods of hunger, but food!

"Is it good?" questioned Crim.

"Is it good!" echoed Boomer, in a shaken voice. "Man, man——"

"Eat hearty," said Crim, blinking. "It's been a long haul, Boomer."

When the mountain of flapjacks had disappeared before their onslaught, the moose had been demolished and the pyramid of beans had become but a delectable memory, Boomer raised his eyes longingly to the shelf where the rest of the provisions were stacked. For, hard on the heels of his acceptance of incredible fact had come the conviction that what he had consumed did not represent an infinitesimal fraction of his capacity.

But Crim shook his head.

"Not now, Boomer. Dangerous business when we haven't eaten for so long." He sighed profoundly as he unloosed his belt, and his ragged mustache quivered in a prodigious yawn. "Sleep first. Then rise up and slaughter 'em."

It was warm in the cabin. Boomer leaned back, extended huge stockinged feet toward the stove. It was as though an ineffable content born of new life had stolen through his veins, radiated from him to include the cabin and all the world. Never again as in that moment, he knew, would he stand on such a luxurious pinnacle of living. All the wealth of Eldorado and Bonanza, were it at his command, could never reproduce the ecstasy of sheer primal comfort that now enveloped him. He had turned back from a dark threshold, and here was cheer. He had leaped from abysmal depths to tighten his grasp anew upon life; and with awe he glowered upon Crim, who was also real and of the flesh.

The little man squirmed beneath his gaze, coughed and tugged at his ragged mustache.

"Ye weasel," said Boomer. "How did you do it?"

"Not now," said Crim, with a self-deprecatory grin. He waved toward the bunk. "There's plenty of time, Boomer. Crawl in and sleep."

"Sleep, is it?" said Boomer truculently. "I'll not stir from where I sit until you've told me where you've been; where this grub came from, and by what manner of logic it was that you was on your feet at the finish, extendin' a helping hand after I'd never thought to lay eyes on you again? Talk fast, ye heathen."

"Well," said the little man. "There wasn't much to it. We got a kind of a break when we needed it, that's all. You were sick for a long time. Out of your head for days, and burning up with fever. I couldn't leave you, and it wouldn't have done any good if I could. There was a terrible storm, and then it turned cold. Three feet of snow on the level now, and sixty below.

"Then the fever left you, and I knew you'd pull through. But there wasn't anything for you to eat——"

"Listen!" cut in Boomer. "What had you been eatin' during them days you speak of?"

"Nothing much," Crim admitted. "I dug up some of those hunks of flour from under the snow where we'd thrown 'em. Cooked 'em in the coals like bricks." He grinned. "They tasted some like bricks, too. And one day a bunch of us was standing outside the Elkhorn Café. A feller from the creeks come out and said he was going to pick out the hungriest-looking bum amongst us and set him up to a plate of beans. He picked out me. Claimed he'd never seen a gent so underfed and mournful. And that was sure a break, Boomer. That feller's name was Haskall. I'm going to pay him heavy for that plate of beans some day. You bet I will."

"Sure you will," said Boomer. "Go on, ye heathen."

"Well, the morning the fever left you and you were sleeping natural, I knew it was up to me to do something. It was a kind of show-down. Seemed like I'd

been depending on you ever since Thirty Mile. Now you were depending on me, and I was falling down on the job. So I was desperate. And that's where we got the break that was the life-saver.

"I was standing by the stove at the Monte Cristo. That was the day the storm had blown over and it had turned cold. The place was crowded, and a feller named Pridmore and his pardner from Twenty-seven Eldorado come stridin' in. They lined up at the bar, blowing the icicles from their whiskers, and telling about how cold it was up to the Forks; and after they'd had a few drinks and had thawed out a little, they announced they were looking for packers to take some more equipment and supplies up to their claim.

"That was just like yelling 'Free pies!'" to a bunch of hungry hobos. I was dang' near tromped underfoot by those big fellers crowding in to get the job. But I kind of squirmed through and leaped up on the bar and dropped down in the front ranks right smack in front of Pridmore; and I said: 'I'm your man.'

"Well, sir, this feller Pridmore and his pardner were both big, hard-looking citizens. They looked down at me and threw back their heads and busted loose with a regular guffaw, and all those other hungry lads laughed also. But I was desperate, and I talked right back at him, and Pridmore patted me on the back and said: 'You got the heart, but you ain't got the heft, feller. Twenty-seven Eldorado's a long ways past the Forks. She's a tough trail.'

"'I'll pack with any man,' I says. 'What are you packing, and where's the stuff?'

"'On account of the storm and for purposes of speed,' says Pridmore, 'a dollar a pound. For instance,' he says, grinning. 'There's a stove. It weighs eighty pounds. Suppose you drew that stove, feller?'

"'For eighty dollars,' I says, 'I'd pack that stove clean over to the Mackenzie. Lead me to it.'

"'Yeah, but look,' says this Pridmore, grinning, 'we'll need that stove before the spring thaw. You could make it in a couple weeks, maybe, but time's the essence of this said contract.'

"'I'll pack that stove to Twenty-seven Eldorado,' I says, 'in nine hours. Is that speedy enough?'

"Everybody laughed again, and I knew I had to make a desperate play, or I was sunk. So I cut in on all the laughin' and looked Pridmore in the eye and said: 'That isn't all of it, Pridmore. I'll bet that eighty against a similar amount that I can do it. If you're a gent that's in the habit of backing his judgment with something else besides loose conversation and cheerful guffaws, give it a name.'

"Well, sir, Boomer, I was out on a limb, because I didn't know whether I could do it in the shape I was in. It's better than nineteen miles to Twenty-seven Eldorado, and you'll recall it's mostly uphill beyond the Forks. But I got action immediate. Pridmore quit laughing and I knew I hadn't mistaken my man.

"'It's a bet, feller,' he says; and he pointed at the clock. 'It's four now. Fifteen minutes to get organized, making it four fifteen. The stove's at the N. A. T. & T. warehouse. At one fifteen to-morrow morning you set down that stove inside the boundaries of Twenty-seven Eldorado. If you don't, you get nothing. If you do, you get ten ounces instead of five. Is that it?'

"'That's it,' I says. 'Let's go.'

"And that's all there was to it, Boomer." The little man sighed with the content of one who looks back at terrific experience. "More than once I knew I couldn't make it. But I thought of you, flat on your back and the shack growing cold. I got there at one o'clock this morning. Fifteen min-

utes to go. Pridmore was there, and a lot of fellers from near-by claims——"

"This morning!" echoed Boomer, aghast. "Saints defend us!"

"I took the ten ounces of dust and rested for a spell. Then I started back," said the little man simply. "Yeah, it was a long ways. But I was afraid you'd freeze stiff when the fire went out. I bought the grub from those pirates, and didn't argue about the price —even the two dollars a pound for that hunk of moose meat! It's funny, Boomer, but getting up here from town was hardest of all. Just climbing the slope with the grub. It was kind of like the home stretch. But I got here." He threw open the stove and thrust in more fuel. Momentarily, in the ruddy glow, his pinched features shone. The weary droop of his mustache yet expressed triumph. "I got here, Boomer. You bet I did."

"Yeah," said Boomer, and the emotion that was in him caused his voice to sound more gruff than usual. "You bet you did, Crim."

He had caught a picture from the little man's words. Almost, because of his Celtic imagination, he could see Crim striding through the frigid gloom of the arctic night, bowed beneath his stove. Hour by hour, he could see him toiling on, following the freshly broken trail that meandered up through the snow-clad desolation beyond the Forks, while hunger, weakness, cold, and death walked in step at his side. Heavier and heavier his burden had become, his knees weak, his very breathing a torture; yet his dimming gaze had turned ever toward the heights. He had not fallen, nor faltered, nor turned back, as men of greater bulk might have done—for the courage and fighting heart of him were cast in giant mold—and thus he had reached Twenty-seven Eldorado with fifteen minutes to spare.

Only the highlights Boomer caught, as he pondered the picture in the flickering gloom of the cabin; but these were sufficient. Later, he heard the stirring details that served to etch the exploit indelibly upon the record of a roaring epoch; of the wagers laid in the Monte Cristo that night when Crim started forth; of how Pridmore, traveling light, had preceded the little man, spreading the news along the creeks; of the excited men who had deserted their warm bunks even at that shivering hour at the call of elemental drama, and had lined the trail in that last heart-breaking stretch to cheer the plodder on; and how Crim had fallen upon his face within the boundaries of Twenty-seven Eldorado, and thus lain prone, so spent he was, while willing hands had unlashed the iron burden from his back. Most amazing of all to those who watched, was the fact that after resting for a space, Crim had resolutely turned his back upon warmth, food, shelter, and rest, and faced again toward Dawson.

"Got all my life to rest in when I get back," he had said; and the words of the little man were told and retold in far wilderness camps. "My pardner's down and out. He's worse off than me."

On the threshold, Boomer remembered as he pondered the picture, Crim had paused to gain strength before he had opened the door. He had collapsed on the floor, peering toward the bunk; and at his, Boomer's, voice, he had risen up.

"I can build a fire," he had announced, like one challenging his last resource. "You bet I can."

And he had. He had built the fire and prepared food. They had eaten. Now the little man was huddled in his chair, like one who, having surmounted a pinnacle, has entered upon a long, interval of luxurious rest.

"Listen, Crim," said Boomer, peering through the gloom with a strange, new humility and a growing and profound respect. "There's a question you haven't answered yet, me bucko. Why did you

do it? What you've done for me isn't in line with some ideas I've held. But get into your bunk first, ye heathen. Don't deny it, you're out on your feet. Need any help?"

"I can make it alone," muttered Crim. "You bet I can."

Later, from the depths of his bunk, the little man answered Boomer's question drowsily.

"Might as well tell you, Boomer. I've learned some lessons about life—and things. Back on the trail to Bennett I figured it was every man for himself. Seemed like it. Fight and claw and snarl. If the next man fell down, kick him out of the way. Or tromp on him. Big fellers crush the little fellers. Little fellers like me fighting and clawing and snarling to keep from getting tromped on. Everybody for himself. Don't give a dang about the next one. That was life.

"Till I met up with you, Boomer—down in Thirty Mile. I'll never forget it. I'd hung on till my eyes was sticking out. I knew it was no use. Nobody would take a chance to help me. I didn't expect 'em to. I wouldn't have myself. Still I hung on. A feller kind of hates to let go. You know just how it is.

"Then you come riding down the crest. I watched you go by. You looked awful big to me, Boomer, and strong; rared up like that grasping your oar, like one of them viking fellers you read about, riding down the storm, grinnin'—and I said to myself: 'Last chance, Crim. There's your hope of salvation sliding by. When he makes the bend, let go.'

"But you didn't make the bend, Boomer. You took a chance on a feller you'd never laid eyes on before. You might have lost your outfit and your life; but you never hesitated. You turned back, and you swung in close to the bank so I could take hold. And when I was so danged weak and froze I couldn't help myself, you shoved out the oar and heaved me in.

"Yeah." The little man's muffled voice was that of one who counts treasure. "You can't fool me, Boomer. You cussed me. You talked to me hard-boiled. But when I was shiverin', and knew I'd never get warm no more, you gave me liquor. You put ashore and built a fire to dry my clothes. And when we got here to Dawson and you knew danged well you didn't have grub enough to last till spring, you said: 'Set up and eat, ye weasel; there's plenty for two.'

"So when you was down and out and the fever had left you, but you was dying for food. I said to myself: 'Crim, if ever there was a time when a debt was due, it's now.' And that's how come I made it to Twenty-seven Eldorado. I kept thinking of Thirty Mile, and that time you put ashore to build a fire. And them other things. And I said to myself: 'It isn't only your worthless hide now. Hang on, Crim ——'" His voice trailed away.

It was quiet in the cabin. The glow from the hearth shone redly on the walls. Boomer blinked into the flickering darkness like one from whose eyes scales have fallen.

"I'm a blasted goat!" he muttered beneath his breath. "So that's how it goes, eh? Boomer, me lad, you need Crim to point the way. You've been wrong all the while."

"And there's another thing, Boomer." The little man roused himself with a prodigious effort. "Something to sleep on. Pridmore says we can pack up to his claim right along. He's got a contract with the N. A. T. & T., and he'll pay us in grub. So we're fixed till spring."

"And in the spring," said Boomer, "when we strike it rich, the monuments markin' our claim will bear the signatures: 'McKearney & Crim, Pardners.' How's that? With your heart

and my heft we got the world by the tail. Fair enough, me bucko?"

"Fine," said the little man humbly. "I'll try to hold up my end of it, Boomer. You bet I will."

"Ho!" chuckled Boomer. "Ye weasel!"

He grinned as he turned his face to the wall; and from beyond that wall came the moan of the wind from the iron peaks and the wail of wolf dogs raised to the pitiless grandeur of the sky. But these things were separated from the warmth, cheer, and new understanding that was within the cabin, as by the space between stars.

BIRDS OF THE WEST AND NORTH AMERICA

The Scaup Duck

(Marila affinis)

THERE are two species of scaups, distinguished from each other by the title of lesser scaup and greater scaup. The latter is larger and the full spring plumage of the male is not so purple on the head. He is about two inches longer than the lesser scaup. The greater scaup inhabits salt water, while the lesser scaup prefers fresh-water ponds. Many hunters do not distinguish between the species and call them both "blue-bills."

The flavor of these birds so sought by gunners differs largely, according to the kind of food upon which the bird subsists. The fresh-water ducks are generally considered the more palatable. When the diet is of strong animal foods, the meat of the duck is also strong and not pleasant to taste. The food of the canvasback and ruddy duck is mostly vegetable, so that this variety is preferred for eating.

Scaups secure their food at the bottom of the body of water upon which they swim and will dive twenty feet and even more. They are able to swim exceedingly well under the surface. A wounded scaup will continue to swim in this manner rather than take its chances on land. When the water is not too rough it will even roost here.

The scaups have a variety of names, owing to their haunts being widely distributed. Besides "blue-bill," these are "broad-bill," "black-bill," "gray-back," and "*dos-gris*"—pronounced dógré. The latter name is the one given the birds by the French Canadians in Louisiana.

Thousands of scaups are taken each year for sport and food, but since a law prevents their being shot in the spring, their numbers have not seemingly decreased.

It is believed that the scaups are not particular about their hours of rest, for they often sleep during the day and have been discovered "fishing" at night.

The scaups mate on their winter feeding grounds before going north in the spring. The males display great fervor to attract the females. They swim about, opening and closing their bills, and uttering peculiar sounds.

The nests are built on the ground near grassy ponds or lake shores. From six to eleven olive-brown eggs are laid. The males have gray backs, white sides and underparts, and head and breast of green and iridescent purple shades. The female is brown about the head and breast, with a wide white band about the bill. The bills of these birds are wide and curved upward at the tip.

Let Me Alone

By Lieutenant Mark Teague

THE narrow, sun-drenched street, which served as the only thoroughfare of Bonanza, result of Nevada's latest gold rush, was strangely deserted. Where, but a few moments before, miners, muckers, and gamblers rubbed elbows as they waded through the heavy sand, there now remained as the only evidence of life the two silent and sinister-looking figures who were steadily advancing toward each other from opposite ends of the short street.

Neither paused, nor looked to right or left as they slowly continued their advance—each walking with measured stride and with a deadly carefulness which spoke of imminent tragedy. Slightly crouched of posture, arms bent at the elbows and pulled back so that the spread fingers of the hands hovered just above the belt line, each seemed the veritable counterpart of the other as they steadily lessened the space which separated them.

Suddenly, as if at a pre-arranged signal, their hands flashed in lightninglike movement; searing flame belched from the muzzles of four black-barreled guns, and one of the duellists, wavering for a moment as though rocked by a powerful gust of wind, slowly sank to embrace his shadow upon the sand. The other, bending lower in order to see beneath the slight haze of drifting smoke, remained in an attitude of alert readiness as he gazed intently upon the victim of his handiwork.

All conversation ceased as "Red" Dennis entered the High Spade, Bonanza's flourishing dance hall and saloon. Few were the eyes which had not witnessed, from windows and other safe points of vantage, the killing which had just occurred outside; and though Red Dennis, tall, lean, and hawklike of feature, was generously disliked by those who composed the motley crowd which had sought refuge from stray bullets behind the walls of the saloon,

Red's guns, swung low in tied-down holsters, commanded a high degree of respect.

Red swaggered to the long, mahogany-colored bar which ran the entire length of one side of the large room, and behind which a pasty-faced, apprehensive bartender mechanically mopped a space already spotless.

"Come on, gents; have one on the house," he called, with a gesture of invitation. "I've done my day's work, an' I shore aim to celebrate. I give 'im an even break an' I'm still livin'—which he ain't. Step up an' name your pizen. Hurry up there," he said, turning to the badly frightened bartender; "wake up an' show the boys how you 'preciates a squar shooter like me!"

A general stampede to the bar, quickly followed by the hurried clinking of bottles and glasses, gave ample testimony to the acceptance of the invitation. Some accepted because of a willingness to drink anything, anywhere, and under any circumstances; others, because they were unwilling to offend the overbearing gunman.

Their drinks consumed, the recipients of Red's gratuity retired to the numerous poker tables opposite the bar, or to lounge in various more or less comfortable attitudes about the saloon. Red now had the consumer's side of the bar to himself, and having imbibed enough "likker" to satisfy his thirst for the moment, he began to look about the room in search of further diversion.

He had not long to wait, for his attention was soon attracted toward the front door as it slowly swung open to admit a most ridiculous-looking specimen of manhood.

Short of stature; his leather-skinned, gentle-looking face seemed strangely out of place beneath the large, ten-gallon hat; his broad shoulders and thick, heavy torso separated arms so short that the long slender hands scarcely reached the lower edges of his voluminous, alkali-covered coat; and his legs, which were half encased in a pair of nondescript Texas boots, were bowed out of all proportion to their length. Altogether, he presented a picture easily calculated to inspire mirth—that is, until one noted the peculiar, steel-gray eyes. Those serenely twinkling orbs held an expression which would have quickly discouraged any attempt at levity in the careful observer.

After standing for a moment in the doorway, his eyes opening wide as he carefully surveyed the room, the strange-looking caricature of humanity slowly moved, with rolling gait, to a position near the rear end of the bar. Disregarding the amused glances which were cast in his direction, he placed a silver coin upon the counter and spoke to the bartender in tones so low as to be inaudible to the watchers. Red, who had been watching with a catlike grin of anticipation, strode quickly over and ranged himself beside the other.

"Skin me for a horned toad!" Red exclaimed, in exaggerated awe. "I wish you fellers 'ud just look what the ol' cat drug in. Now, just what 'ud you call it, boys? It looks like a cross between a horned toad an' a hydrafoby polecat. It smells like a polecat, too, so it kain't be human."

The stranger gave no sign of having heard, and Red, grasping him by the shoulder, whirled him away from the bar and the drink he had just poured.

"We allus invites a stranger to enjoy a little dance before he drinks in this place," Red stated in mock politeness. "I'll just play a little chune on m' ole .45 while you gives your legs a good exercisin'. Git goin'!" he yelled, as he drew the long-barreled weapon and pointed it at the feet of the stranger.

The bow-legged one, seemingly puzzled by what Red had said, calmly looked for a moment at the pointed gun, then deliberately swept his intent gaze over the grinning faces of the rough as-

semblage; having done this, he again turned his attention to the glass of amber-colored liquid which reposed on the bar.

"Dang you! I'll show you that Red Dennis means what he says," Red yelled in rage, and he began to empty his gun, the bullets striking the floor dangerously near the feet of the stranger's high-heeled boots.

Contrary to the expectations of all who watched, the object of Red's bullying attention did not even flinch, but turned and looked at the jumping six-gun as though unaware of its potentialities.

Red was nonplused, and the wondering onlookers began to shuffle backward with uncertain steps. None had ever seen a man act in such unorthodox fashion. A tenderfoot, under similar circumstances, always obliged with an eccentric and highly entertaining exhibition of nimbleness. A real Westerner either "took water" and obeyed, or washed out the insult with a stream of hot lead. This man—this peculiar combination of physical characteristics, whose dress failed to stamp him as either tenderfoot or Westerner—danced not, neither did he fight.

Red could think of nothing quite appropriate to do. The man standing calmly before him seemed indifferent to the bullets which splintered the floor near his feet. He might be crazy—and probably was—but he certainly did not seem to be afraid. Having no precedent to follow, Red was beginning to feel ridiculous in his uncertainty.

Then, for the first time, he met the stranger's cold, level glance. Something in those unwavering, steel-gray eyes warned him that the situation was serious. But a side glance at the faces which crowded behind him ended the paralysis which had gripped his tongue.

"Skeered to death, or I'm a flyin' fish," he said uncertainly. "Anyhow, you're goin' to shake a leg, or else swaller smoke. Are you goin' to jump?" he questioned in a hard voice, beginning to reload the empty gun.

The queer stranger's eyes had never left Red's face; and now, in a quiet voice, he answered for the first time.

"I ain't wantin' no trouble, mister. I'm a peaceful hombre as wants to be let alone. I wants to keep out o' trouble, mister, 'cause it allus makes me sad. Guess I'll just swaller me another drink an' be hittin' the trail."

"Dang you! I said, git goin'!" Red almost shouted, his face stormy. "Didn't you hear what I said?" He again leveled his gun, but this time pointed in the direction of the other's body.

"Yes," the stranger spoke, his voice still low but strikingly tense, "I reckon I heard you all right; but, y'see, I got rules. In the firs' place, I never dances less I wants to; an' in the secon' place, I don't want to—an' what's more I ain't goin' to."

"Lissen, you sawed-off polecat, I'm done tired foolin' with you." Red's words were ominous and his eyes deadly. "Git busy an' step, or go for your gun. I promises you a squar chance an' an even break."

"You don't see airy gun on me," returned the other, with narrowed eyes. "You talks a lot about an even break, but it don't mean nothin'. You yellow sidewinder! You calls it an even break to crowd a man into goin' fo' his gun, when you knows all the time you c'n beat him to the draw with a mile to spare. Your kind is lower down than a snake's belly. You wouldn't give a yellow dog an even break, an' I'm goin' to prove it right here."

He paused, pointed to the bartender, and continued dramatically: "Blindfold both o' us, and lay two guns, one of 'em loaded an' one unloaded, on a table between us. We'll take holt o' hands, grab for the guns, an' shoot. That's what I calls an even break for both o' us."

Red Dennis, standing open-mouthed during the tirade, began to bluster.

"Why, you slimy pup, who ever heard of a man fightin' that way! I've a dang good notion to nick your ears for you anyhow. You think you're gittin' away with somethin' smart; but you ain't doin' nothin' but crawfishin'." He looked nervously at the crowd, some of whom were beginning to laugh as they edged closer. He saw the stranger's contempt reflected in the grinning faces, and tried to pass the incident over with a deprecatory gesture.

" 'Course I kaint shoot a greenhorn who ain't got nerve enough to go heeled," he said weakly, holstering his gun.

"You ain't nothin' but a yellow bluffer," challenged the stranger scornfully, at the same time jerking his coat open to disclose two serviceable-looking six-guns, which nestled snugly in shoulder holsters.

There was a wild scramble to get out of the possible line of fire as the two men faced each other. A deathly silence settled upon the room, broken only by the labored breathing of Red Dennis, as he faced this, the most trying of several astonishing and rapidly succeeding situations. Thus, they stood in crouched attitudes, for seconds which seemed interminable, the entire room and its occupants giving the impression of a ludicrously posed flash-light photograph.

The very audacity of the stranger's actions seemed to have robbed Red Dennis of all power to move. He began to wonder if what the stranger had said was true, and if he, instead of the other, was being played with, only to be eliminated at the opportune moment.

The stranger had not moved; but now he slowly drew his coat back in place, allowing it to cover the black-handled guns.

The tension which had been apparent in the faces of the onlookers seemed to lessen; there were even a few cautious movements forward.

A mean and crafty gleam had crept into Red's eyes, replacing the expression of astonishment which had been very apparent.

Suddenly, his hands swept in an incredibly swift movement toward his guns, and almost simultaneously with the movement, two .45s blasted at him from the hands of the stranger. Red's draw was stopped before his guns had cleared their holsters; both wrists broken by the smashing impact of .45-caliber bullets.

Red cringed and cursed; the spectators cautiously left their places of safety, while the stranger carelessly holstered his weapons.

"Humans is a weak animal," the victor solemnly stated. "When there's a whole lot at stake, nobody wants to give the other feller an even break; an'," he ended, with a peculiar grin, "I reckon I jes' kaint help from bein' human m'self, sometimes."

Tiger's Den

By John Frederick

Synopsis of Preceding Chapters.

JOE WARDER is sent across the border to capture El Tigre. He sees on the trail a lad whom he has saved from a beating. Later, he meets a Mexican riding the lad's horse. He forces the Mexican to retrace his trail and finds the boy, Dennis MacMore, cruelly lashed to a rock. Warder releases him, and dismisses the Mexican with the promise that he will not ride his miserable horse for three days. The two travel toward San Clemente, the boy enlarging on the prowess of his brother Patrick —The MacMore—whom he is going to seek. They are pursued by four men; the reckless lad disregards Warder's advice and charges them, firing. The men vanish, and Warder's friendship with Dennis is sealed. At last, they look down on the lights of San Clemente.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE HORNETS HUM.

WE rode down to San Clemente through the dusk and watched the night rise up from the valley like water in a great translucent pitcher. The boy was delighted more than ever, and as we came into the town, he turned and called my attention to a stranger color that lay on the face of the San Clemente River.

It was enough to startle any one—a long crimson streak that appeared to be self-luminous. As I stared, it tarnished and disappeared, and looking up into the west, I could see the cloud fade and go out in the sky. It was as if some one had thrust down a great red torch and then withdrawn hand and light again.

"Looked like the water was on fire," suggested young MacMore.

"It looked like blood," said I. "But blood will boil without fire."

"Ah, Joe," says Denny, "cheer up, man, will you? We're not dead till our hearts stop ticking."

As we came in, keeping close to the side of the river, we found that the houses around us seemed devoid of inhabitants except children who played in the street, or fled around the great rough trunks of the cypresses, or ran down to wrestle and shout by the edge of the river, their voices flatly and loudly echoed by the water.

I was mighty glad that the eyes of the older people were not on us. For, although it might well be that I could walk through all the streets of the town without being recognized, I would a good deal rather have walked through fire. This was the night, but now and then the diffused shaft of light that struck outward from open doors, open windows, touched upon the pair of us, and every time it was like the pointing of a gun, to me.

Young MacMore was simply delighted and at home in the midst of my trouble. He commented on everything; because as a rule he talked gayly, restlessly, like a child who speaks his thoughts rather than a grown man who expects an answer. He spoke of the thickness of the dust of the street; of the acrid smell of it in the air; of the scent of the town itself, so different from the odor of an American village. That is to say, there is in Mexico the fragrance of stewing peppers of a hundred varieties, such as the village wives pick out for the beans, the sauces, the meats which they are to cook that day, and the aroma of the tobacco is a different matter, also, and all things tell the nose a different tale. One might say that life has a different taste in Mexico, because of these things.

A delightful impression young MacMore was getting. He babbled along about it, and spoke of the music of the children's voices, and the hushing of the river between its banks, and the softness of the wind, and the smell of the green fields which walked in upon it; but where were the grown people?

I told him to listen harder, and the next moment, because the wind which had been blowing the sound away now fell down, we were able to hear clearly the sound of the band which played in the Plaza Municipal, so that I could all at once see as with an eye the currents of the people moving around the park, and the bright, keen glances which the men and the women cast at one another, covert, and therefore more penetrating, for a Mexican deals subtly, but with a point.

I told the boy that the people of the town, mostly, would be there. That was all the more to our purpose. What we wanted to do was, first of all, to get to the address to which the MacMore family had been sending letters for Patrick—a forwarding address of one José Guadalupe, who should be able to put the boy on the right track to find his brother. So we made two inquiries and eventually got to the place. It was not the sort I would have expected. Usually, an American is in touch with the higher classes, but this was a narrow street flanked by the low houses of the peons. This particular address took us into a small patio at the entrance to which we stopped a scooting boy and learned from him that José Guadalupe was home, and that he lived at the second door on the right.

It was one of the typical compounds where the peons live in Mexican towns, several houses surrounding the patio, with two or more families in every house. From the open door of one of them a guitar was twanging loudly, accompanying a voice which sang huskily some of the native songs; and always, in the distance, there was the snarling and snoring of the band in the Plaza Municipal.

At the second door on the right we found a man squatted on the threshold. Behind him I saw the dimly lighted interior of a room where a woman was sweeping the dirt floor. It was the kitchen, with its raised fireplace in view, and the blackened pots hanging from their hooks. The pungent sweetness of Mexican cookery was still sharp in the air.

"Is José Guadalupe at home?" said the boy in his scholastic Spanish.

The squatted form on the doorway did not answer for a moment, as though translating these words into his native dialect. At last he raised his head.

He was that bulldog type, so familiar south of the Rio Grande. No breeze stirred in this patio, and the side of his face glistened with perspiration where the light touched him.

"I am José Guadalupe," said he.

"I've come to ask about Patrick MacMore," said Dennis.

Guadalupe rolled to his feet with a lurch. He dropped his cigarette to the ground and came out a step suddenly toward us.

"Who are you?" said he.

"I am his brother," said Dennis.

José rubbed his hand across his forehead and came still closer, staring earnestly upward into the face of Dennis; he then looked toward me, but not so fixedly, before he replied.

"This is his uncle, also, I suppose?"

It made me double up a fist to hear him chuckle; Dennis was surprisingly patient.

"I am really his brother," said he. "I've come here from the States to find him or to learn why we haven't heard from him for such a long time. Can you tell me where to find him or his mine?"

Guadalupe turned his back on us.

"Why," said he over his shoulder, "should I know anything about the gringos, even about the king of the whole tribe?"

"Ha?" said Dennis.

He had started in the saddle, and flung down to the ground. Guadalupe waited for him in the shadow beside the door, with the gleam of a knife in his hand.

I was fairly cursing with anger, disgust, but not with disappointment. I had only faintly hoped to be able to get the boy off my hands at once. Now, he was bound to be a long trial!

I slid out a revolver and told Dennis to stand back.

"José," said I to the Mexican, "you had better say a quick prayer to San Guadalupe. I have a gun pointed at your head."

"Ring, Alicia," says the peon, as calm as you please.

Instantly, I saw the flash of the woman as she sprang across the kitchen floor, fast as a leaping cat on the kill. She was bare-footed; her brown legs flashed to the knee as she ran, and I had a glimpse of a brown, pretty face, of white teeth.

She was out of sight at once, and I heard a gong, or a brass pan that served as a gong, struck three times in rapid succession.

"There's some mischief up," said I to the boy. "Let's get out of here while we have a clear retreat."

"You go," said the young loon. "I have to stay here. I mustn't be bluffed out by any one. Besides, if I miss my brother here, where shall I pick up the trail?"

I didn't have time to argue with him. My impulse was to take him by the nape of the neck and jerk him back into the saddle; but now, from the corner of my eye, I saw a shadowy form dart out of a door near the patio entrance, then the gate slammed heavily, and the bolt of a big lock clanked home.

All quickly, neatly, without any trouble—and here was I trapped as securely as any rat, all because this unlucky boy had asked in the wrong place

about his brother. For the moment I almost hated Dennis; certainly I hated that omniscient Patrick about whom he loved to talk so much. . . . . .

But there I was, caught. And that trap had teeth, as well. The guitar stopped jangling across the inclosure; I heard a subdued muffling, and swore to myself that I could distinguish easily and clearly the hollow sound of a rifle stock striking against stones. . . .

At that signal, I felt as though twenty pairs of eyes were watching us covertly, and twenty hands prepared to strike for our hearts with steel or lead.

Dennis was, as usual, apparently delighted by the presence of danger. He sang out to me as cheerfully as you please: "I can hear the hornets hum, Joe! Shall I jump this scoundrel?"

"That same scoundrel will cut your throat if you come near him," I told the boy. "Guadalupe, the bullet in this gun is already hitched to the middle of your forehead. Personally, I should enjoy splitting your head open like a cantaloupe, and if you budge a foot or a hand, I'll do it. Do you hear me?"

"Amigo," says this cool rascal of a greaser, "I hear you perfectly. Thank your kind fate that I did not have a gun or you would have dropped into the dust before now!"

Nevertheless, he did not back up or try to bolt through the doorway. Into that opening I saw the form of the woman suddenly step. She was no more than a girl—eighteen or nineteen, say—but she had a gun at her shoulder leveled fairly at the first possible enemy.

That happened to be young MacMore.

I had much rather face a weapon in the hands of an expert than in the hands of a novice. Those unpracticed hands of hers were apt to pull the trigger even against her will. I barked: "Guadalupe, if that gun goes off, you're a dead man!"

Guadalupe did not answer. He could see for himself that I meant what I said, and perhaps he guessed from my handling of my weapon that, though I don't pretend to be one of these "Deadeye Dicks," still, I hit reasonable targets at point-blank revolver range.

But Dennis MacMore was speaking before any of us could say another word. He raised his hand—Heaven alone kept her from shooting at that movement of his—and taking off his hat to her he says with a bow: "Cara mia, I am not yet in good range."

Then he stepped straight up to the muzzle of the gun!

CHAPTER IX.

ALICIA WHISPERS.

I WAS standing enough to one side to see his smile and the flash of his eyes, so that I suddenly knew this incredible youngster was not giving the slightest attention to the rifle. All that mattered to him was the pretty brown face of the girl behind the sights.

Perhaps I haven't said that young MacMore was as handsome a boy as ever broke hearts; but certainly he had a quick effect on the daughter of José Guadalupe. The rifle wavered suddenly; I knew in an instant that she could no more harm this gringo than she could shoot her own brother.

Guadalupe stirred a little beside the door. The point of this had not been lost on him.

"Fortune and women," said he, "both favor fools. Alicia, go back into the house and stay right there till I call for you."

She disappeared, but slowly, and still staring at the boy, and he fixedly after her. He even was rash enough to make a step closer to the door—and to the knife of that savage Guadalupe.

I stopped him with a word and saw him start like a sleepwalker suddenly wakened.

"It may be," said Guadalupe to MacMore, "that you are the brother of the man." He whistled—a long, soft, dwelling note. Then he added: "We are all simple people here, friends. We are afraid of the wild caballeros from the north!"

He grinned as he said it, but put up the knife; and, a little later, I heard the bolt of the patio gate grind, and the panels fold back. Apparently, the trap had opened again, but I had seen enough to know that our safety here was as uncertain as life.

The guitar began to strum once more, and the unseen singer recommenced his song. But I felt no more safe than a bird under a cat's paw.

"You are the brother of Patrick MacMore," said Guadalupe dryly. "You have come a long way on your horse to find him. So!"

He said this with infinite irony, adding: "Perhaps he has been unable to write to you, señor?"

Dennis MacMore came closer to the burly Mexican. It was a way he had, of standing close to anyone when he wished to speak seriously.

"I have letters from him in my pocket," said he. "Would that be a proof to you?"

"Sometimes," said the Mexican, "children pick up eagle feathers on the mountainside."

It was a fairly neat way of conveying his doubt, but MacMore laughed a little.

"You'd think," said he, "that Patrick never spoke about me, or else that he had to be protected from people."

"Ah?" says Guadalupe.

He shrugged his shoulders, which might mean anything. Then he added: "As for me, I know very little about the señor. He keeps a mine in the mountains and rarely comes to San Clemente."

He seemed to speak this honestly enough.

"Where is the mine, then?" asked Dennis.

"Where is the key to the safe?" sneered Guadalupe. "Of course, that is a thing that he must tell to every one, but he forgot to tell me. If I ever see him again I shall ask, so that I can be able to tell every one who wishes to know."

Dennis turned to me.

"This is a rude fellow," he remarked. "I wouldn't believe that Patrick could have anything to do with him, except that he was always apt to have friends of all kinds. Perhaps even this kind, down here. What are we going to do?"

"Get out of here as fast as we can," said I.

He turned back to make a last effort. "My friend," said he, "if you cannot direct me, tell me who else would be likely to know where I can find him?"

Guadalupe merely shrugged.

"Well, then, let me at least know what has happened to the letters which my family has been sending for the last year. Has Patrick come here for them?"

"That I don't know," said Guadalupe.

"You don't know whether letters have come?"

"I don't know how long since the last one came."

He added: "I don't remember any letters. I know nothing about you and your business, señor."

This put a stop to further talk. Even Dennis could see that, and he was swearing beneath his breath when he remounted his horse.

"We've had this work for nothing," says he. "What's the mystery behind it all? People must be trying to get hold of Patrick's mine, and he's sworn this man to secrecy." He called back to Guadalupe: "If you see my brother again, tell him that I have been here. I'll come every day again, if I can, to find out what you've heard from him."

Guadalupe merely grunted, yet he walked a little distance toward the patio gate with us. This might have been a concession to good manners, though I had a very shrewd suspicion that he was staying with us as long as possible in order to note down a good description of both of us. In this respect, the chief center of his attention was not young MacMore, but myself, and I would have been glad to have him take his eyes away from me.

He turned back, at last, with a surly good night, and we went on toward the street completely baffled in our first attempt to get on the trail of the elusive Patrick MacMore. If I had suspected that there was something wrong, before, I was reasonably sure of it by this time. Yet it might only be that the older MacMore was studiously covering up the secret of his hidden mine. Stranger things than that had happened in San Clemente, I was well aware.

We were in the passage of the gateway when a slender form slipped out beside us, and a hasty, cautious voice was calling to us:

"Señor! Señor!"

It was Alicia.

Young MacMore was out of the saddle faster than a puncher at a tying contest. He stood so close to her that it looked almost as though she were in his arms, and I could make out the dim flash of her teeth, her eyes, as she looked up to him.

She was saying: "Amigo, amigo, you are in danger. Leave San Clemente; never come back here!"

"My dear," says the boy, as cool as you please, "to-night I've found another reason to stay in San Clemente. I've never found a place that I liked so well. I intend to live here."

"You will die here, only," said the girl to him.

The big, snarling voice of Guadalupe roared from inside the patio: "Alicia! Alicia!"

The guitar player ceased again. I saw the girl wince back from the boy at the sound of her father's angry call, but MacMore followed her. I had seen ample demonstration that he feared no man in the world, and now I could guess that if he was brave against men, he was a positive hero with women. I heard his low, mischievous, chuckling laughter as he endeavored to pursue her a few steps.

She, however, lingered to warn him again.

"You will not go, señor? Not for your life?"

"Not for ten lives, Alicia."

"Ah, brave!" says she, with her voice trembling in a way that should have shamed him. "Then I'll tell you the name of a man who may help you to see Señor MacMore. Only, swear that you really are his brother!"

"By your own sweet soul I swear it," said this easy-tongued young deceiver.

"It is Don Ramon. Señor Don Ramon Cantaras——"

"Alicia!" bellowed the father.

"I must go," she gasped.

"In one moment," said the boy. "I have one thing else to say to you."

"Say it, then, and let me go!"

"It is a thing which must be whispered, Alicia," says he.

It gave me a chill of the blood to see the brazen easiness of the young rascal. He stepped in and took her into his arms and kissed her deliberately.

I saw her squirm for freedom, but she made a very feeble struggle. Then he let her go. I heard the gasp of her taken breath and saw her stagger a trifle—then she was gone as swift as a bird, not back into the patio, but through a small door that opened into what seemed the heart of the wall at the right hand of the gate.

The door whisked shut behind her and young MacMore swung up light as a bird into the saddle.

"You've had your throat half cut before, on this same night," I told him as we rode out into the street, "and for the sake of what you've just done, it will probably be cut the rest of the way before morning. D'you know that the Mexicans are the most jealous race in the world?"

"Are they?" says the boy, carelessly. "A good lot, I find them to be; and I can't believe anything bad about them, Joe. You're a cynic, Joe. A confounded cynic. You don't believe in anything except Larry and your six-gun, if that's the right word for it."

"It isn't," said I, "except in books and on the tongues of tenderfeet."

"Exactly," says he, "but if you believed in something more than horses and revolvers, you wouldn't discourage a poor fellow who's trying to learn the world."

"Bah," says I; "they'll dissect you—they'll cut you to ribbons!"

"Isn't it worth it?" says he.

"What's worth it?"

"Why, such a girl!"

"A peon!" says I, sounding a good deal more disgusted than I felt.

"A brown Venus," says he. "Not brown, either. But olive. A sunburned olive, I'd call her. Roses in her cheeks, too, Joe!"

"And garlic on her breath!"

"Sweet as violets, by Heaven!" says the boy, "or roses, or lavender, or——"

"Or a cow's breath," says I.

He laughed at that. "You're not angry," says he.

"Not a bit," says I. "I'm a fatalist. But if anybody could hurry on the finish for two men, you're doing it. Look over your shoulder."

"Well," says he.

"You see that old fellow riding the burro?"

"Yes. I see him."

"Well, he sees you, too; if you can follow my drift."

CHAPTER X.

SENT BY EL TIGRE.

I HAD spotted this shadow some time before, or at least so I thought. But the boy would not believe that I was speaking the truth.

"This would make it too much like a romance," says he. "As a matter of fact, nobody can know about us in this town."

"Have you forgotten pretty Alicia and her growling father?" said I.

"He could not have spread the alarm so soon," says the boy.

"You'll see that he's the one who has sent that same old man on the burro, however," says I.

"Will you be able to prove it?" cries Dennis.

He didn't wait for me to answer, but spoke up himself at once, half laughing and half sighing.

"Did you ever know a pretty girl without a currish father?"

"I'm thinking about the safety of my hide and not about pretty girls," said I. "Besides, I don't have any luck with the pretty ones."

"Do you go in for brains, Joe?" said he. "Well, for my part I think that brains in a woman are like salt with meat. A little seasoning is all very well, but too much of it simply parches the throat."

I stared at this boy who could not shoot, who could not ride anything much rougher-gaited than a rocking horse, but who rode along so serenely in a town where already we had made one hairbreadth escape, and where we already were being shadowed by a spy. But still he could talk about beauty in women!

I was rather of the idea that he was bluffing me, so I carried on the talk with him along his own lines, while we went toward the house of Cantaras. In the meantime, after we had asked our way, I kept the old man on the burro

in the corner of my eye. He managed to follow us in all of our turns and windings.

"A good heart is better than a fine complexion," I suggested to Denny.

"Of course," said he, "but you can't see the heart except in the face."

"You can see kind actions, Denny," said I.

"There's nothing left but kindness for a long nose and a yellow skin and a pair of spectacles," says he.

"How often have you been in love, Denny?"

"Twice a year," said he, "since I was twelve years old."

"In the spring, I suppose, when the flowers begin?"

"Yes, and in the winter because they are gone."

"You'll never be able to stick to one woman," I told him. "After all of these calf-love affairs."

"Practice makes perfect," says he. "And that old man on the burro is still practicing on our trail. Shall we catch him?"

"Why?"

"To find out who sent him."

"I'm glad that you're willing to look at men and burros," said I, "after that pretty Alicia."

"Not pretty. That's a word for a child. She's lovely. Dress her in red with a rose in her hair and she'll make half of the pale-faced beauties look like nothing at all."

"Denny," I assured him, "you're going to waste half your life in this love business that you're so fond of. Besides, here is rather the wrong time to be casting eyes."

"There's never a right time if you wait for it," he told me. "You have to shoot what you can, on the wing. If you wait for the birds to settle, you'll never dine."

This metaphor pleased him so much that he laughed softly at it, but I was beginning to be more interested in the old man of the burro than I was in the vagaries of my companion.

The burro had fallen back to some distance, though it still followed us in all the windings of our way. After all, the boy's suggestion had been a good one, for there were several things that the spy might be able to tell us—such as how we had been recognized, and who it was who ordered him to follow us.

When we came to a thick growth of willows that fenced in an alley that ran down toward the river, I turned in there, and the boy behind me. According to my direction, he took the horses back among the shadows of the trees, while I placed myself near the alley's mouth.

Presently I heard the quick, light beat of the burro's trot. Sure enough, its grizzled head turned in at the entrance to the alley of willows. I was half choked by a whirl of acrid dust raised against my face by a thrust of the wind. As I blinked the mist out of my eyes, the little burro was at hand, the long, thin legs of the rider, unsupported by stirrups, reaching almost to the ground.

As if on purpose to make matters easy for me, he reined in the little animal at that moment and looked fixedly before him, then with a quick jerk of the head aside toward me.

He had the mouth of a Colt to measure when he looked my way.

A gesture with that gun was enough to make his hands go up into the air above his head. I could see now that he was one of those people whom age dries a little more and a little more, from year to year, shriveling and preserving them, extracting more and more of the juice of life from them, but still keeping in them life itself.

His loose sleeves fell back, and showed his arms, skeleton thin, with the elbows sticking out crookedly; his chest was hollow, so that the white beard

flowed straight down; and from under his brows, his eyes looked out at me through a deep shadow.

He looked like a meagre-faced saint, but when I searched him, I took out an old single-shot revolver that certainly had done duty overtime; and inside the leg of his boot I found a pair of long knives. He did not mind the removal of the gun, but his old clawlike hands jerked and contracted when I took the knives away.

"You're following a winding road to-night, father," I said in Spanish.

"My burro," says he, "knows the way home as well as I do, so I let him follow his will. Sometimes one way, and sometimes another."

"And sometimes turning back on yourself?"

"Perhaps he even does that. I am thinking of other things, and, therefore, I do not mark the road that he goes. You, señor, have taken me for some rich farmer going home with the gold from the sale of his crops. See what I am—a very poor man—and let me go on my way."

I put the point of one of his own knives through his bush of beard and scratched the neck beneath it.

"Come, now, father," said I, "and let me have the true story of why you have been trailing me this night?"

"I? Trailing?" He laughed in despair and in scorn. "Who should I trail? Am I not——"

"No matter what you are. The thing I wish to know is the name of your master. Who sent you on this trail after me?"

"Does the wind have any other master than Heaven?" he asked me. "Why does the dust blow? I have no master, kind señor."

He said it with a rich conviction that filled his throat. However, in that instant I recognized the eloquence of the natural liar, and began to think that I had the old fellow in my hands.

"Look!" said I. "Is this knife yours?"

"Yes, it is mine, and I know that you will not rob an old man of his last treasure."

"Do you think other people would recognize it?"

"It has been seen in my hand during these forty years!"

"Then it would be known?"

"You never could sell it at a pawnshop. They would recognize the knife and accuse you of killing poor——"

"Killing you? On the contrary, if the searchers after me should come upon you with the knife buried in your throat, the belief would be that the old man had collected so much wisdom that at last he understood the folly of clinging to life. They would say that you had opened the door to the future with your own hand, my friend."

"You gain," said he, "exactly one old burro, too slow to keep up with you, the gun that you have stolen from me, and the rags in which I am dressed. As for the knives, they are not worth speaking of, for even a kitchen wife would be ashamed to use such old, dull, soft, blunt things."

"That's the second or third time," said the voice of young MacMore in English, "that he has mentioned the knives. There must be something about them that he values or is afraid that you will learn."

"Look them over, then," said I, and passed them to the boy.

The old man actually gnashed his teeth when he saw this done. But he swallowed his curses perforce and submitted.

I went on: "I'm not interested in killing you, old man. I simply want a little talk out of you. Who sent you to follow us to-night? Will you tell me that?"

"Listen to me, friend," said the old fellow smoothly, "I have been to the great United States, and I know the

justice of the people there. They do not kill harmless old men for nothing. I have told you the truth——"

There was a little exclamation from MacMore, at this point, and he came hurrying up to me.

"The butt cap of this knife," said he, "twisted loose between my fingers, and this is what I shook out of the inside of it."

He showed me the little heap in the palm of his hand, a dozen small diamonds. In every Latin there is an instinct for hoarding, and I knew that this represented the savings of the veteran. When he saw MacMore's discovery, he lowered both hands a little and made with them a futile, fleeting gesture toward recapturing his small treasure. But the movement of my gun drove him back, though he groaned, and his little eyes glittered wickedly at MacMore, who had made the discovery.

For my part, I was willing to let him off as painlessly as possible, so I said: "Look here, father. You get back your gun, your knives, and the jewels inside of 'em. But tell us first the answer to a few questions, beginning with this one: "Who sent you on our trail?"

There was not much light, only the thin arc of the moon stamped like a strip of silver paper against the blue-black sky of Mexico; but still I was able to see the tremor of the body of the spy, and the glistening of the drops that sprang out on his face. His white beard wagged and his teeth clacked together as he started to speak and then suddenly changed his mind; but I took the jewels from MacMore and made a fountain of them, tossing them into the air and catching them again.

The old man watched with a groan, clasping his hands together like a mother seeing her child dandled by savages. Then he cried out to have the gems given back to him and he would tell us.

I gave them back; he cherished them against his breast, the bloodless old miser. So, breathing hard, he gasped out:

"El Tigre sent me! Heaven help me for speaking, and Heaven help you for hearing it!"

CHAPTER XI.

AT THE HOUSE OF CANTARAS.

THIS was as unpleasant as any news I ever received. My hope had been that by lingering that week among the hills I should be able to get at last into San Clemente unnoticed by the bandit who already had had me chased through the more distant plains, as I have described. Now, however, he actually had his eye upon me in San Clemente itself. And I felt like a field mouse, when the shadow of the owl sweeps over it.

More clearly than ever, I saw that I must get the boy off my hands by finishing his business, and for that purpose I must get on to the man named Cantaras, who had been mentioned by Alicia. He was our only present clew to the whereabouts of Patrick MacMore.

I tried to get some information from the old man about Cantaras, but he swore that he had already fulfilled his bargain with us by naming El Tigre, and he demanded his freedom.

I let him go. In fact, he was so trembling and shaken with fear that I was ashamed to keep him with us any longer. One might have thought that the word he had spoken was the name of a cruel and avenging spirit which now would be on the wing to overtake and punish him.

He sent the burro scurrying away like a big dog, and after the little beast was out of sight, we still could hear the heels of the rider thumping cruelly against the hollow sides of the donkey.

This is the time for me to make the register of a very fine and brave offer which young MacMore now made.

He said: "The thing for you to do, Joe, is to get away from me and get about your business. This long-range eye of El Tigre has found you out. I think that the man must be a spirit to have spotted you so soon. At any rate, what has made it possible is the fact that you have me to cart about. I'll go on with my own affairs; we'll say good-by, and I'll go on my way."

"Denny," I answered, "are you pretty sure that your own business is perfectly safe?"

"Entirely sure," says he.

"So safe," I went on, "that when you mention your brother's name and ask where he can be found, gates are closed behind you, a whistle brings armed men around you, and you practically have a knife at your throat! Suppose there had not been two of us when we asked that question about Patrick MacMore?"

He nodded in the moonlight, so seriously that I knew he had thought well over all of the details of the business. He understood that there was something very wrong, though he was entirely willing to try to work out the matter for himself.

"We were careless about that," he declared. "But this next case is sure to be different. If——"

His voice was blotted out by the rapid beating of a horse that galloped at full speed past the mouth of the alley and on down the street. When I heard the boy again, he was saying: "Cantaras will put everything straight; I don't think that the girl would send me to the wrong man."

"I don't think so either," I agreed.

"Then good-by, Joe. We'll find each other again, one of these days. When I get hold of Patrick, the two of us will join your stag hunt. Don't forget that."

I agreed with him that it would be a great day. I felt no particular desire to part from him, but it was plain that I was myself in a good deal of danger, and it was only fair that he should begin to play his own hands.

We said good-by, he jumped up into his saddle almost with the swing of a cow-puncher and rode back into the next main street, from which we had turned into the alley, and he was gone.

Now the instant that he was out of my sight, I know that I had done wrong in letting him go. I started after him at once and was about to call to him when it occurred to me that it might be as well to look on from a distance and see how he got on with his adventure single-handed. If he went along smoothly with the thing, all very well. If he did not, at least it might be possible for me to rescue him.

These were the things which I had in mind when I trailed Denny MacMore down the street. They seemed to me good, sane reasons, at that moment. They still seem logical to me as I write them down, but that goes to prove that logic isn't worth a rap compared with instinct, and my instinct on that night told me that I was doing wrong—told me that I ought to keep at the side of the youngster every instant he was in this land of danger.

At any rate, I saw him lose his way before he had gone two blocks, and immediately afterward, I observed him asking questions of three people one after another.

I began to gape at the sight of this foolishness. He might as well advertise himself in the newspapers as to talk as freely as this!

However, at length he appeared to be put on the right track, and I followed him until he came to the entrance of a good-sized private park. The gate of it was closed and here he spent a few moments arguing with the gate keeper, but at last—I think it was after five minutes or so—the gate opened and he disappeared, the hoofs of his horse clinking musically on rough gravel.

Now that he was inside, I was more

minded than ever to keep a closer lookout for him. I wished that I never had left him; but I decided that I would not try to get through that gate where he had just passed. I had showed myself too much in San Clemente!

Instead of that, I took Larry back into a thick patch of woods that filled a block or more near that park which was the apparent residence of Ramon Cantaras, then I went up to the high adobe wall, capped with stone, that surrounded the place.

The moon was giving an amazing amount of light, considering its size. Altogether, I was pretty uncomfortable about scaling the wall and getting into the tangle of trees whose heads I could see above the coping. But if I wanted to help the boy, I had better start at once. I swarmed over the wall, therefore, hung by my fingers from the inside, and so dropped silently into a bed of leaf mold.

It was a rudely made park. That is to say, there were no lawns that I could see, and very few elaborate flower beds, except near the house itself. The rest of the park was covered with a rough, shaggy growth of trees, and even the underbrush had not been properly cleared away in all places.

I was glad of this, but would have been gladder if I had not been wearing riding boots. A hundred times during and before expeditions of this sort, I've sworn to myself that I would furnish myself with riding boots and walking shoes. The riding boot is perfect for its own job, but if you want to know its imperfection, try to stalk silently through woods like those, as I did that night in the park of Cantaras! The paths twisted in unplanned fashion, simply following the lie of the land, or turning with awkward suddenness around the trunk of a tree, or even a big fallen log which had been allowed to decay until it was probably not worth the cost of its removal.

When I had stumbled up these paths for a time, I was guided by a ray of light, and this led me straight to the door of the Cantaras house. It was by no means as pretentious as I had expected from the extent of the grounds. It was just an ordinary two-story affair, built around the usual patio. Its appointments seemed extremely rustic, even for San Clemente. For instance, just behind the house I found one of the big wells with a sweep attached at the mouth so that mule power will drag up the heavy buckets or work the pump. This I found later. My business at first was to get as far into that patio as I dared.

It was as naked as the palm of a man's hand, and there was only one shelter for such an advance as mine, and that was the series of cellar casements, each big enough to hold a man who knew how to make himself small.

I got to the entrance of the court in time to hear a door squeak open and then a remarkable man's voice speaking. Remarkable, I mean to say, because it was so deep, so strong, so musical. The voice of young MacMore, sounding wonderfully thin and boyish, made answer. He declared in his fine, academic Spanish that he wished to learn how he could find Patrick MacMore and had been directed to this place.

"Ah," says Cantaras, for he had introduced himself by that name, "who sent you to me on such an errand?"

I wondered what sort of a lie the boy would tell, but he was saved from the need of an answer by Cantaras, who went on smoothly: "But that's not of importance. The main thing is that you are here and that you are a brother of Patrick MacMore. Of course I know him. Better perhaps," he went on with a brief laugh, "than you know him yourself. I am glad to have you here. Come into my house, señor. This is an honor. A *mozo* will take care of your horse at once."

In fact, a couple of servants came out of the shadows and instantly took the horse by the head and led it off.

In spite of the fact that Cantaras was so cordial, I almost wished that young MacMore would limit his visit to a few more questions and refuse to go in. But I had let him cut adrift; it was late; he was tired; and perhaps all of those reasons operated together to make him enter the house of this stranger.

They passed inside, and the heavy door swung slowly shut behind them.

I did not start back for the trees at once, but remained where I was, crouched in the embrasure of a cellar window, looking over the strength of the house on the moonlit side of the patio. Like the houses of all well-to-do Mexicans, it was furnished with bars across all of the lower windows, which gave it somewhat the look of a prison, but it was sure to be stocked with comfort inside the walls. Those walls were seven or eight feet through, a good guarantee that the heat of the summer and the cold of the winter would not penetrate them.

In short, it was a strong, solid place, and the sort of a house that a Mexican likes to call home. Rifle fire would never have any effect upon it. A bomb would hardly nick its walls to the core.

I was deciding these things and about to start slipping back for the trees, fairly satisfied, when a man walked straight toward me out of the shadows on the farther side of the patio.

When he was opposite me, he turned for the gate of the court and paused there a moment to finish a cigarette. He was armed heavily, with a rifle slung across his back, army style, but it was not his weapons which attracted my attention. It was his face. For this fellow was that same scar-faced Oñate whom I had met earlier on this expedition—the same who had taken the horse from young MacMore!

CHAPTER XII.

INSIDE.

OBLIGINGLY, Mr. Oñate waited there until he had lighted his cigarette and allowed me to spot the gun on his right hip, and the bulge of the other beneath his left armpit. Then he sauntered on, and I breathed more freely, but with a conviction that I had been a fool when I turned him loose back there in the mountains. The good you do to the bad ones comes back to you like poison on the waters. I have tried a hundred times to be kind to yeggs, thugs, dead-beats, card sharps, crooks of all kinds such as littered the border. I think I can say that I have sown good seed from Mexico City to Butte, but I never ran across any returns, except once I was blackjacked by a new "friend," and another time I had a gun-butt used on me when it might have been a bullet. Still I had kept on with Oñate the same stupid game I had played before, when I should have split his skull with a chunk of lead and let the buzzards pass their judgment on his merits.

This was what I thought to myself as I looked after him from the mouth of the patio of Cantaras. Oñate had been headed north the last time I saw him, and that was a long time ago; here he turned up pat in San Clemente in my path a second time, and though I hadn't much reason to think that it was my business that brought him here, instinct in this case shouted loudly and long that he had come here to help in the taking of Joe Warder's scalp.

Certainly that scalp felt loose on my skull, just at that moment.

That instant of thought, while I watched Oñate sift out of view among the trees, was split apart as the bright steel of an ax splits dark-grained wood. Voices, and words, and cries, are light and dark—I mean, there is a palpable darkness in a groan and a palpable

brightness in a scream. I've heard an Indian squaw shriek under certain circumstances of a tribal war, and even the memory of the sound leaves a dazzle before my eyes. Now, I felt light jump across my brain, for I heard a loud shout from the interior of Cantaras' house.

It was a shout to stop the traffic anywhere, but it fairly congealed my blood, for I recognized the voice of young MacMore, raised in fear, rage, and resistance.

Other voices closed around that call rapidly, muttering, smooth, assured, savage. I tell you that I could see the scene and the treachery. There was a heavy, crashing blow, like the noise of a chair splintered against the wall; a whirl of confusion and uproar, then the heavy boom of a Colt revolver, with a last wild cry of despair to answer it and end the confusion.

Not one murmur, not one breath of sound after this; but the final cry was that of Denny MacMore!

You will wonder that I should have remained where I was during all this uproar that was taking place around my friend, but, as a matter of fact, I had begun to move at the first outcry. I knew that the doors would take a lot of investigation, and all the lower windows were more than safely secured with bars. Well, I climbed up the face of one set of those bars, swung myself violently on a ledge over them, and so gained the window next above.

There I slipped into the dark of a room and remained on my knees for a moment, slowly gasping back my breath. At twenty, or twenty-five, I could have managed that little climb like nothing, but at forty-plus a man can carry a weight, but he cannot run with it.

As I got the dizziness out of my head and controlled my breathing a little, I wondered at the echo of other breathing in that room; but changed my wonder for another emotion when the echo got out of step with me.

Some one else was crouched there in the thick black hand of the darkness, some one who might be taking a bead on me, with the faint moonlight sending a ray or two through the window and onto my head and shoulders.

I slipped to the floor and crawled forward like a prowling tiger, with the revolver ready in my hand. It was the worst bad luck that I had entered a dark chamber where some one was asleep, but I had to do something about it.

I pulled off my boots, when I was a fair distance from the window. That was leaving evidence against me, all right, but I would have left more than that, for a secret exit from that room. I spotted the breathing. It had not left the corner from which I first heard it. And now I started slinking toward the corner from which it came.

I was close, very close, when the voice broke out in a faint groan, stifled by fear and therefore having a horrible bubbling note in it. I never have heard a worse thing than that. You may talk of seeing death, but that was like hearing it.

I pushed my empty hand before me and found a cot, bed clothes, long, coarse hair—an old woman in bed and absolutely frightened to death by my entrance!

It was an ugly affair, for me. I struck a match for one instant. It showed me the door through which I would get access to the interior of the house; it showed me also the woman, old as the wrinkles of her skin had suggested, her hair a grisly gray, her eyes closed, but her mouth still faintly puckered in an expression of horror that was a sickening thing to see.

I pressed my hand over her heart. There was nothing to feel. I wasted another ten priceless seconds in putting my ear to her breast, and then at last

I heard the feeble pulse of life, with a flutter and tired pause in it.

However, she lived, and that was enough for me. I did not pause to administer any restoratives, I can tell you. Instead, I went across that room, through the door, and into the corridor beyond as fast as I could slither, and I did not wait to pick up the boots I had taken off.

In the hallway, I started to the right, and turning a corner I almost ran into the arms of three people. Two men and a woman were coming, one of the men carrying a lamp, with the flame jumping in the throat of the chimney at every step, and the light wavering up and down along the hallway.

I turned myself almost inside out starting back the other way. Before I reached the first door—it was on my right—the lamplight gleamed on me, so I wrenched that door open and jerked it shut noiselessly behind me as I entered.

They might have seen me; they were almost sure to have seen me; but what better thing could I do than thank Heaven that I had put one heavy door between me and them and look for another way out of the place?

Already I was thinking that I had played the part of a monstrous fool by venturing into this house so blindly, when I knew well enough beforehand that it was loaded with danger to the ceilings thereof. What chance had I here to help the boy, whereas I might conceivably have worked for him from without!

I stepped to the window. It was quite a large room, and apparently, from what I could see of the dark loom of the furniture about me, a living apartment rather than a bedroom. It seemed that the floor had been sprinkled recently for the sake of coolness—I remember that there was a damp feel to the air and a humid scent in it.

I reached the window—and touched iron bars! I cannot tell why that fact chilled me so much. It was only one point of escape cut off, and yet the discovery struck me with a shock. I gripped those bars with a foolish impulse of terror, and flattened my face against the iron; it was an outside room, and therefore I was able to look across the dark heads of the park trees, faintly touched upon by the moonshine, here and there. It gave me a wild and romantic sense of being girt about by black waves in a lonely castle—a childish impression which disappeared at once.

That silly idea barely had come to me when the door knob turned with an abrupt rattling.

They had seen me enter here, then?

I got behind a tall-backed chair with one long stride, and pulled out both revolvers. I had had my back to the wall before, but never quite as badly as this, since I could remember!

But I thanked Heaven when I saw a man come in bearing a lamp high before him—a lamp with the flame jumping in the chimney at every step he made!

No, they did not know that I had come in here, but by a most ungracious stroke of circumstance I had picked out by chance the very room toward which they were making!

At that, I ducked back into a corner and got behind a sort of low settee which was covered with white goatskins. I depended on the shadows and on the intervening furniture to cover my retreat to that place; but once there, ensconced in the angle between the back of the settee and the corner of the wall behind it, I was fairly comfortable and able to see and to hear everything that happened.

I had enough to use my eyes and ears on at once.

The lamp carrier was a long-legged fellow, with a vast pair of shoulders, and huge arms; most uncommonly fero-

cious looking. He was dressed in cheap white-cotton clothes, like any peon, and his straw *huarachas* creaked a little as he moved—a proof that they were on the new side.

This monster, after he had put down the lamp, stepped hastily back out of the inner flame of its light. I could see him, after that, in the background, as a sort of gloomy witness of the affair, unpleasantly ready to execute sinister orders.

The second man in the room was Cantaras himself—I heard him addressed by that name by the peon almost immediately after they came in. He was a sleek, smooth man, with a dapper air, and very quick with his gestures. At this moment he was apparently so nervous that he walked constantly up and down the room.

However, I was not so interested in the giant *mozo* or in Cantaras as I was in the woman. For it was that same Alicia who had directed poor MacMore to this house.

No matter what my own danger, I felt pity for her at once, because I could see that she was frightened within the very verge of her life. She sat in a chair against the wall, with the lamplight full against her face, making her skin appear a sickly yellow-white. Her head had fallen over to one side; the eyes were very wild, but fixed; and the hands gripped each other in her lap with frantic strength.

She looked the picture of one who has just passed through a paroxysm of terror, and now rests and patiently waits for a still greater dread to overwhelm her.

As far as that was concerned, every one of the three seemed to be waiting for some one or something in that room; all three had an odd air of awful expectancy, though, of course, neither of the men appeared half as terrified as the poor girl.

Cantaras was the first one to speak.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SENOR.

DRAGGED in as she had been, like a criminal in terror of death, or torture at the least, I had expected that Cantaras would quiz the girl first; but, instead, he talked to the *mozo* as he paced up and down the room. That giant kept his monstrous arms folded across his chest and stared at the girl while he answered the questions of his master.

"Old Manuelo," said Cantaras, "he should have been on the heels of the young man."

"Old Manuelo," said the giant, "was trapped by them like a blind dog running on the scent of a pig."

You can believe that I sharpened my ears, at this. It was not hard to infer that Manuelo was the name of the veteran whom we had caught.

Cantaras stopped in his pacing and hissed with surprise.

"There was no better pair of eyes in San Clemente!" he declared. "Otherwise, would I have given him that work to do?"

The giant unfolded one arm to make a gesture of indifference to this question. I could gather that he was only partly under the control of Cantaras, or he would not have dared to be so free.

"Gualtero," says Cantaras, "did you see Manuelo caught?"

"Yes, I followed along behind him all the way, and I was not surprised when he was trapped. Old men get dim eyes, even though Señor Cantaras will not believe it!"

Cantaras snapped his fingers in vexation.

"What did you see? What did you hear, Gualtero?" he demanded. "Mind you, my friend, because the señor speaks to you now and then, you are a fool to give yourself airs with me!"

The giant smiled, and it was as evil

a grin as I ever saw. However, he answered obediently enough: "I saw the gringos catch him in the narrow road through the willows. I slipped up close enough to hear them ask who had sent him on that trail, and the old man answered that El Tigre had sent him."

Cantaras threw up both his arms in a silent gesture of fury. And I saw the girl tilt forward and grip the edges of her chair, as though the mere sound of this name made her forget some of her personal terror.

I was not surprised. From what I knew of that man's exploits, I myself feared him almost like a ghost.

"How did they force him to tell? Torture, Gualtero?"

"They promised faithfully to let him go free."

"Ah? And then he went loose?"

"No. When they had what they wanted, they cut his throat and dragged him into the brush."

Cantaras seemed indifferent enough when he heard this fluid lie. But I could guess what had happened to old Manuelo. If the giant had been close enough to hear the words of Manuelo, he was also close enough to see the glitter of that little handful of diamonds, and I could guess where the jewels were now. I could almost see the huge man leaping on the rider of the burro from behind. It would have been a noiseless death, at least.

Or perhaps this monster in the corner with his vast shoulders and his little head was a sort of walking conscience who strode the by-ways in the service of El Tigre and overwhelmed treacherous servants of the ubiquitous master.

"Manuelo is gone," said Cantaras at last, "and that is the end of those who betray El Tigre!"

He glanced at the girl as he spoke, and she shrank back with a faint moan, entirely recalled to herself.

"And this girl?" Cantaras asked "Did she come willingly?"

Gualtero turned his head and regarded her fixedly.

"She came—willingly," said he.

"He will come here directly," said Cantaras, still walking up and down, "and he will bring word directly from El Tigre. It is always that way. Why El Tigre should prefer to give his authority into the mouth of a gringo, I cannot tell. But we know that that is what has happened. The Señor has promised to be here at once. He will look at the girl, too, and tell us what to do with her. Tell me, did you speak to her father?"

"I spoke to him," said the giant.

"What does he ask?"

"He is a wise man. He does not consider a daughter a treasure. However, he has a need of her in the house, if it is convenient to let her live."

"He will soon be here," said Cantaras, nodding to himself and speaking almost under his breath. "I hope there will be no blood," he added more loudly. "I hope that. For my part, I am a man of peace."

"Yes," said the giant, "you never have ridden in a raid!"

Cantaras cast a blighting look at the big man, and for some moments after this he continued his walking up and down.

"Warder?" he asked suddenly.

My own name startled me, even when given a Spanish pronunciation.

"He is to die," said the giant with perfect calmness.

It was almost as though my arms had been shackled behind me and I had heard a judge speak, there was such calm surety in the voice of Gualtero

"He is to die," said Cantaras. "Yes that I can understand. Though it may not be easy. I have talked to Oñate, who knows all about this man."

It was a compliment for which I could not thank Oñate, the traitor.

"Oñate," said the giant, "is a coward and a fool. Hush!"

He lifted a great hand above his head, with the forefinger extended. Then he said quietly: "The Señor!"

I write that word with a capital because of the peculiar manner in which both Cantaras and the big man spoke it—very definitely, reserving a certain air of respect and reverence, almost, for the special occasion.

I think that Gualtero must have heard a step in the hall, because he glided at once to the door and drew it open. Into the opening stepped a well-built six-footer—who was not a Mexican!

This was the gringo who appeared to be in the confidence of El Tigre.

"Señor MacMore!" said Cantaras. And he hurried forward to take the hand of the newcomer.

This was Patrick MacMore, at last!

I strained forward until I almost lost my balance and toppled against the settee. This was the man of whom young Denny was never done sounding the praises. This was the breaker of ladies' hearts, the conqueror of fighting men, the man of many devices, the keen wit and the cunning brain!

Well, it's human nature—at least, Western human nature—to take all stories of prodigies with a distinct grain of salt. But when I saw the silent, springing step with which the señor crossed the floor I knew, that instant, that young Denny had not exaggerated anything he said about the strength of the man. Physical power is an attribute that shines out from some men just as great intelligence shines out from the faces of others.

And when The MacMore, as Denny was so fond of calling him, came into the circle of the lamplight, I saw a very pale, handsome face with not much likeness to that of Denny, but with a lofty forehead and deep-set eyes that stirred me even where I crouched in the shadow at the corner of the room.

He shook the hand of Cantaras briefly, gave the giant a mere nod, and then looked at the girl.

That look brought her out of her chair. She flung herself on the floor in front of him and stretched up her arms.

"It was only because he was your brother, only because of that, Señor!" said she.

And again that little breathlessness in the speaking of the title. As though she were calling him "marquis" or "grand duke," you might say!

"Because the young rascal said that he was my brother, of course you had to believe him?" said the Señor.

"Ah, Señor, I was unwise!"

"There is no great harm done," said he. He took her hands and drew her to her feet. "Go home to your father," said he.

Her head tilted back, as I have seen the head of a boxer do, when a hard punch landed. She swayed where she stood.

"And tell him?" she gasped.

"Why, tell him that everything is forgotten and forgiven. Hurry, my dear. Because we have other things to talk about, here!"

She ran to the door gladly and swiftly enough; there she whirled and gave the Señor one glance over her shoulder, and was gone.

Said the giant, as the door closed: "If it should be that El Tigre heard of this, and the message had not come from him——"

He paused ominously.

"You have done one murder tonight," said MacMore quietly, "that is enough for you to think about. Just where do you keep the diamonds, Gualtero?"

I thought that the big fellow would run at MacMore; he actually crouched like a beast for the spring, but he could not confront MacMore—not for an in-

stant! Then he straightened and I could hear his husky breathing.

"I keep them for my master," said he. "But as for the traitor who——"

"You lie," said MacMore. "You keep them for yourself!"

He turned his back on Gualtero and faced Cantaras, who was blinking like one brought out of darkness to face a strong light.

"Ramon," said he, "what is the word of the other—of Warder?"

"He has been seen. He will be followed, Señor."

"He has been for hours in San Clemente," said MacMore. "You were warned. You were told the very hour he would arrive. But still he has been left free. He must be a dead man before the morning."

Cantaras started to speak, but apparently the Señor was not a man to be argued with. He remained silent.

"That man is dangerous," said MacMore. "Hunt him with couples. You hear?"

"I hear."

"As for the young fool who calls himself my brother, he is young enough to be pitied. Take three good men, with Gualtero to command them, and let them take the gringo down to the sea and put him on a ship for New Orleans."

He turned quickly about.

"Gualtero, El Tigre may forget even the diamonds!"

CHAPTER XIV.

MACMORE, MINER.

EACH in his own way, I should have picked Gualtero and Cantaras to be about as difficult men to handle as one could find in a year's search, but this MacMore had taken them both in hand without trouble. I admired the way he had put the whip on that big brute, Gualtero, and the casual way he disposed of Cantaras. Those people were afraid of him, and only partly because he represented their mutual master—El Tigre.

It was a hard pull on my imagination to jump from such a man as Patrick MacMore to the still greater figure of El Tigre himself. That long-haired, copper-skinned Indian who was the pet terror of the border, was even a greater man than I ever had guessed if he could turn a white man like MacMore into such a subordinate as lieutenant.

MacMore turned Cantaras and Gualtero both out of the room by saying that he wished to write a letter. They went at once, Cantaras as though he were not the master in his own house, and Gualtero stalking out first, keeping his dignity, but not able to control one shudder as he turned his back on MacMore.

That was the final touch in building up the picture of MacMore. Gualtero shivered when he turned his back on the man, and that gave me a really grisly suggestion of ferocity and power.

I thought that the remark about letter writing was a joke, but I was entirely wrong, for no sooner was the door closed than MacMore sat down at the table and took writing materials out of his pocket. He wrote with a pencil, and the lines flowed rapidly behind it; I was fascinated by the skill and the speed with which he wrote, which was so great that it seemed as though the pencil were running in an irregular groove. A slight creaking sound began—the table trembling under the vibrations of the man's heavy arm.

Under cover of that sound, small as it was, I dared to stand up from behind the settee. I slipped around the end of it, gripping my revolver hard.

It was like stalking a tiger with a mere Colt for a weapon. I had to force myself back to the truth that this was only a man, after all, and, therefore, capable of being knocked flat and killed by a .45-caliber slug.

When I was halfway to him, I saw his head jerk up a trifle and he turned rigid; then the pencil continued its same rapid writing! But I knew very well that in that instant he guessed there was another man in the room—or danger of some kind coming up behind him. He was using the interval of writing to try to formulate some plan in self-defense—about the coolest exhibition of nerve that I ever saw!

I stepped into the plans, whatever they were, by saying: "Don't move, MacMore!"

"All right," said he, in the most undisturbed voice. "It's Warder, I suppose?"

If he only knew it, I was so staggered by this instant recognition that he could have done almost anything with a quick effort; but he could hardly understand how much I was upset. I never had set eyes on him before, or he on me; I never had heard his voice, or he mine; but he had been able to name me offhand at the first words that I spoke!

"Yes," said I, "this is Warder."

I stepped slowly around him, with the gun ready, but he did not attempt to stir. When I was fully in front of him, he smiled and nodded at me and my leveled revolver as though we were both old friends.

He was one of those men who grow as you come closer to them. Even when he entered the room at the first moment, I had been able to write him down one man in ten thousand. But here at close hand he was one in ten million. He had looked strong, before; he now looked panther-quick, as well. But chiefly the difference of effect lay in the eyes, for seen close up they were the eyes of a man who never has been checked. No matter what the obstacles, he always had broken through to get what he pleased out of people or out of life. It is hard for me to analyze the exact effect they had on me, unless I say that when I was coming up behind him, it was like stalking a great beast of prey, and now that I was in front the similarity was even greater. It was an effect of perfect ruthlessness.

I did not doubt, now, what young MacMore had told me about the powers of this older brother of his; boy or man, he was bound to conquer. With all the advantage on my side of a drawn gun held on him, I still was about as badly frightened as ever I've been in my life. Being fenced up in the peon patio with enemies all round me was nothing compared with this.

"Sit down, Warder," said he.

I merely smiled, and he nodded.

"You think I might push the table over on you, eh?" says he.

Of course I thought that! At any rate, I felt much better at a little distance from him, with my two feet under me, so to speak, so that I could dodge thunderbolts even if I could not forestall them.

"How did you know me?" I asked him. "How did you know that I was behind you, even?"

"Shall I give away my secrets?" said he.

Then he smiled at me, and there was something wonderfully winning in that smile. It invited confidence as much as the smile of a boy.

"There was a slight tremor in the floor," he told me. "Perhaps, besides that, there was something in the air. I saw you with the nerves in my spine, Warder!"

"You saw me?"

"Ah, you wonder how I knew that it was you?"

"That's it."

"That's perfectly simple. Some one was in this room who wasn't supposed to be here, some one who was not exactly a friend of mine. Who could it be? Why, no one but the friend of young Dennis MacMore, as he calls himself. You know the story—kill one

snake and its mate will come back to it the next day."

This may have been perfectly clear reasoning to him, but there were a good many missing links in the chain, from my viewpoint—perhaps from yours, also, as you read it. But the reason I never have set the world on fire is just because I lack that ability to skip the links in between and make big jumps to strange conclusions. Genius is the only name for that.

"You're clever, MacMore," I told him.

"Yes," he agreed surprisingly, "I'm clever. What will you have of me, Warder?"

"Your company back to the border."

"You're going to arrest me?"

"Exactly."

"Here in a foreign country where your badge of office isn't worth a pie plate?"

"I won't arrest you till I have you safely on the farther side of the Rio Grande."

"And what's the cause for the arrest?"

"Plotting against the life and welfare of an American citizen."

"You'll have no witness that I've ever done that."

"On the contrary, I'll have an eyewitness."

"Come, come, Warder. Who will that be?"

"Myself."

"Hello! Have you ever laid eyes on me before this night?"

"I'm the man you plotted against, and I heard you in this room."

He made a little gesture that almost got him shot.

"I was a fool to forget that, of course," said he. "I'll keep my hands still, hereafter, too," he added. "I saw your trigger finger move just then."

"You were a sixteenth of an inch from eternity, in fact," I declared to MacMore.

"You've written me down a villain, eh?"

I was able to meet that smile of his as I remembered some of the details of that border warfare.

"You won't deny that you work with El Tigre?"

"I deny absolutely everything—in court!"

"Three times I've seen the dead men after El Tigre passed," I stated. "It wasn't a pretty sight, either. And I don't want to see it again."

"Of course you don't! But I've never ridden with El Tigre in my life."

"I think that's a lie."

"A lie?" says he.

His smile froze on his lips, and I knew that he was on the verge of throwing himself at my throat.

"A lie," I repeated.

I was ready to send a bullet into his forehead if he stirred, and beyond a doubt, he knew it. He merely leaned a little toward me across the table, so that the lamplight fell more brightly on his face.

I saw a strange detail, then, which I would not have believed if it had been told to me by anything but my own eyes. It was a fairly warm evening, the sort of a time when the least effort makes a person perspire. For my own part, the job of facing down the man had me adrip and I was constantly afraid that drops might run down into my eyes.

But MacMore's face was as dry as could be. The lamplight modeled his skin, which was strangely pale for one who lived so much of his time in Mexico, and I never saw a handsomer face, if it had not been for that wild-animal look of the man who never has been denied.

Denied he was now, and thoroughly in my hands.

"I don't think that you could possibly hold me, if you carted me all that distance north," he suggested.

"We have good judges up there," I answered, "and they have a way of judging the crooks!"

He considered a little.

"Perhaps you're right, Warder. You're the sort of a fellow who generally is able to guess at the truth pretty accurately. But let me give you this idea," he continued, "which is that you may be wasting your talents up there in the cold North. There's a grand opening here for any one with an educated gun, my boy, and a few convenient talents along that line."

"Do you think I could make a living that way?"

"Beyond a shadow of a doubt," said he.

"In partnership with you, MacMore?"

"With me?" said MacMore. "Not at all! I'm a miner, you see."

To be continued in next week's issue of WESTERN STORY MAGAZINE.

PAPER AND TRUCK GARDENS

THE pulp-paper mills of the Pacific Northwest have acquired a fresh impetus and are developing a new industry, now that it has become the fashion to paper farms in order to make crops grow. This new industry consists in turning out gigantic rolls of paper of the consistency of lightweight building felt which is, nevertheless, only one thirty-second of an inch thick.

In the vicinity of Port Angeles, Washington, this new kind of paper is being laid flat on newly prepared ground in long rows, the sides held down with turned-up earth. Plants are set out or seeds are planted in holes that have been punctured in the paper.

Experiments have proved that canteloupe, watermelon, tomatoes, cabbage, and other crops yield a fifty-per-cent increase if they are grown under the pulp-paper mulch. In fact, Western experimentation in this line has been so successful that Hawaii wishes to take advantage of the method on its pineapple plantations. So big shipments of the crop paper are being sent to that country.

THE PREDATORY DEER

USUALLY the coyote or some of his ilk gets the blame for trespassing too ruthlessly upon the land holdings of man. It comes as a surprise, therefore, to learn that the gentle deer can also make a nuisance of himself. Nevertheless, Alaska experiment stations have been reporting to the United States department of agriculture the fact that deer have been disporting themselves to the partial destruction of the strawberry crop.

At Sitka, it was pointed out, a bed of strawberries yielded at the astounding rate of one thousand quarts of berries per acre and might have done better but for the invasions of wild deer. The animals trampled or fed upon the tender plants early in the spring, and a night watchman, who was specially engaged to patrol the field, reported finding as many as seven of the deer there in one night.

Climate, in fact, is not half the bar to the growth of strawberries in Alaska that the wandering deer is proving himself to be.

What The Buzzards Said

By Austin Hall

Author of "The Parson and the Bear," etc.

FOR the thousandth time during that terrible day, "Big" Baylor glared at the strange little man trudging ahead of him; and for the thousandth time a muffled oath caught in the depths of his throat.

"Uhhuh!" mumbled Baylor. "He ain't natural. Him with all that stuff and learning! Yeh. Thinks he's putting one over. And me a-dying for water. The low-down hog! Knows very well that there's a spring ahead; but for all that, he won't let me have more than one little swig at a time. And here I'm a-walkin' behind him like I was his slave. I sure must be going crazy."

The words died into mere thoughts. Two men in the desert! Their footsteps on the sand were almost noiseless. Plod, plod, plod went the little old man ahead. The pony followed with the precious ore pack, heading its weary way toward the foothills in the near distance. The sun lay in the west, a blazing furnace of scintillating torture. In all directions stretched the land of the heat devils, shimmering in the basins, and now and then merging into fantastic mirages of cool waters and bewitching unrealities.

Big Baylor had already encountered enough experience for a lifetime. Crook and bad man, he had been picked from an untimely death two days before by the little old man in front of him; but that did not matter to him. Neither did it weigh on his conscience that he owed a debt of everlasting gratitude for the timely arrival of the prospector and his water. What he cared for just now was a big drink; but, strangely enough, he did not dare to take it. Something held him back—something that he could not quite understand. In the city he was a giant among men; but out here, somehow, his stature had diminished.

Why?

That was the thing that was rousing Big Baylor's anger. Perhaps it was the little man's uncanny knowledge of his surroundings—the way in which he threaded through the hills and gullies, never hesitating, always sure. Or again, it might have been the old fellow's peculiar silence; he had scarcely spoken

a word since the big man had first looked up at him after going down under the intense desert heat. Big Baylor remembered how he had lost consciousness two days before, the black agony as he sank on his hands and knees, and the merciful oblivion as he had stretched himself out to die. Then there had come a bewhiskered face peering down on him; and the words:

"Almost done for, hey, pard?" Blue eyes were shining kindly on him out of a sunburned face. "Well, I got here. I seen you from way over on the other side of the plain and was almost scairt that I wouldn't reach you in time. Thar now! Hold up your head. That's it, now, be keerful! A little water at a time and I'll have you trotting out of this hole like a two-year-old. Thar! I ain't got much water; but what they're is I'll share. You bet."

Or again it might have been a little incident next morning when a book happened to drop out of the donkey's pack —a dog-eared volume of many readings. Big Baylor had picked it up and read the title with a grunt of wonder: "The Process of Thinking!"

And from that minute on, the big fellow had credited the old man with more than his share of uncanny wisdom. A desert rat, a prospector, reading a book like that! And to offset the incident, Big Baylor was a veritable coward. He knew well enough that he could have wrung the old man's neck, only—and there was the point—he didn't. The book had set him to wondering; and later on the prospector's explanation had added to his awe. They had been sitting behind the shade of a rock at the time.

"Yeh!" The old fellow said softly. "I seen you take up the book. I guess you was kinda stumped at the title, eh? Well, I don't know as I blame you so much at that. 'The Process of Thinking!' It's a book I bought down in town about two years back. That was before I made this here last strike. Written by some professor over in Boston. Only—I don't agree with it so much, though it ain't exactly the author's fault. You see, this man thought out the book down there in the city where it ain't possible to read a man's mind on account of nobody's thoughts being natural in civilization; seeing as they're all covered up with a coating of lies and bluffs to let him make his way without getting killed, whereas here in the desert, it's different. Yep! It's like surgery or medicine. When you want to know something about a man's body, you first take his clothes off, don't you? See? And you never heard tell of a barber cutting a man's hair with his hat on, did you? Well, says I, that's the same way with the mind. If I had that professor out here I could teach him a lot. They ain't no fumadoolery about a man's mind in these parts; it's bare to the quick. See? And that's the reason why I ain't skeered of anybody I meets in the dry lands. But in the city, it's another story."

However, they were not in the city; Big Baylor had already found it out. The desert had stolen his nerve. Here was a little man with a burro and considerable gold—all his for the taking. Also, there was that water bag strapped to the pack—water which his companion doled out in meagre mouthfuls. For two days the crook had followed like a dog, afraid of something that he could not define, and which, for the life of him, he could not master. The situation was almost ridiculous; he still retained his revolver; the only things lacking were the extra shells that had been in his pocket when he had succumbed to the terrific heat. He could give the little fellow a tap on the head, or finish him by simply pulling a trigger. And now, for the thousandth time, the big man had coaxed up his courage, only to have his strange companion turn around at the vital moment. Over in

the west a buzzard was playing peek-a-boo with the sun, swooping out of the light and skimming from one of the hills in a black-pinioned flight of investigation. The little man pointed meaningly.

"You see," he said, with a sort of dire emphasis, "it ain't healthy here a bit. Regular death angel, hey? Seems to me it's about time we took another drink. That old bird ain't no sign of friendship at all, 'specially to a pair of humans out here on the desert. A pack of buzzards kin smell a man about two days before he dies. I don't like 'em. But they're a part of the country, and we've got to take 'em as they come. Howsomever, it almost tells me I was right about that water. There's trouble ahead; and no mistake. Most likely, the next spring is dry. So we'll have to be keerful. I tell you it ain't no pleasant experience—this here thing of reaching a dry water hole with an empty canteen. But if we use our heads, we kin preserve enough liquid to carry us to the next one. Savvy?"

But Big Baylor savvied nothing; that was the trouble. His skin was scorched with the heat; his tongue was thick; all he could see or think of was that bobbing burro just ahead, and the water sack. Every joint in his big body was creaking for lack of moisture. Water! Water! It had become a nightmare and an obsession!

"Yep," continued the old man, "I guess we kin have another wee drop now. Enough to wet our whistles, anyhow."

But he did not pass the canteen; instead, he slipped to the side of the burro and produced a tin cup, lifted it to the water sack, and poured it two thirds full.

"You see," he explained, as he handed it over, "I wouldn't trust you with the bag. Wouldn't trust anybody—not even myself. A man can't help being human; so he just glues his lips to the spout and fergets to let go. He's so dad-burned thirsty he simply can't help it. A gallon tastes like about three drops. And, of course, the first thing he knows the sack is empty. Yep! Just like that. You see, stranger, them death birds know all about it. And most likely that old feller has been investigating. Watch him close, and see if he doesn't swoop near the ground. Hey! There he goes. He thinks we're a-goin' to consume the last of the water, and then we'll be at his mercy. But we'll fool him plenty. Here you are. Only, don't drink it at a gulp. Take it easy, sip by sip. Hold it in your throat and get all there is in it. There!"

Big Baylor had never tasted anything so delicious in all his life; he could feel the cooling freshness inside his parched mouth, washing around the sides, and slipping down his palate into his throat. Sip by sip, he followed instructions; one eye on the bird of ill-omen, and the other on his companion. The water was like life itself; the soul to his body. In a moment his body regained some of its old vigor; his thoughts cleared. Then again he looked up at the object flitting off in the sky—the buzzard.

Bird of evil and of death! Some one was going to die. The little old man of the desert had spoken the words; and Big Baylor believed them. But at that moment he made his resolve. The man who was to die would not be himself. He had been a fool too long already. His companion had just told him that the next spring would be dry. So why wait? There was only one bag of water. Why continue the torture? Calmly he watched the old man take his share of the liquid and then replace the bag. After that, it was the same old march. The poor burro trudged along, and the desert rat led the way.

Step, step, through the burning sands. The buzzard had become a mere speck in the hazy distance, drifting over a jagged peak along the horizon. The

sun lay in the west like a great ball of fire; the foothills were close at hand, close enough for the crook to distinguish a sort of opening that led through their midst.

And just one stroke would give him the water!

All the while he kept repeating the fact under his breath; but still he deferred action. Something warned him. The desert rat was in his own playground. And besides, the crook hated to be alone. The little man had said:

"I ain't afraid of anybody in the dry lands."

And, then, there was the terrible danger of getting lost. Big Baylor had already had a sample of that. His resolution wavered, until it came back to the matter of water. Water! He would willingly commit murder for the sake of one long drink. After all, it was better to take a chance with plenty of water than to go on with the torture. Suddenly his gun came up with a flash; but, just as suddenly, his victim turned about to face him eye to eye. But this time Big Baylor did not hesitate; he had his man covered and he was boss.

"Huh!" he gloated, with sudden bravado. "I guess you know what I mean. Stick 'em up high! That's it! Higher than that! Now. Some one is a-going to die, eh? That's what the buzzards said. And you don't fool them babies a bit. Huh! Well, I'll pretty near agree with you there. Only it ain't a-goin' to be me. Savvy? That's why I'm a-goin' to take the water. I need it. And you know this place better than I do; so I figger you kin make out. But I'm a-goin' to give you a fighting chance. You tell me how to get out of this danged desert and I'll let you live. Or you kin keep your mouth shut and get plugged. Take your choice! How about it? Tell me how to reach civilization!"

To Big Baylor the scene was almost comical; he had been expecting almost any kind of resistance; and, instead, he was looking into the gaping mouth of a terrified old man. The little fellow was fairly shaking; his eyes flitting first to the gun and then toward the water bag on the burro's pack; his knees shook and his words came in a tremulous stutter.

"You—you ain't a-goin' to kill me? I'm—I'm a poor old man."

"You bet I am!" came the savage answer. "Out with the required advice, or I'll plug you! You look like buzzard meat to me. Cheated 'em a long time, ain't you? But this time it appears like they've got you. But as I say, I'm a-giving you a fighting chance. Just tell me the way out and I'll let you live. But I'll take the water, and the gold and the burro. And when I get to a town I'll mebbe send out help to bring you through. How about it?"

But still the old man hung back; it seemed as though his tongue had become glued to the roof of his mouth; his lips quivered.

"The gold!" he cried. "I'm an old man and it's all I've got. I'm old, and this was my last trip. You're taking the earnings of a lifetime. And besides, didn't I save your life a few days back?"

Big Baylor laughed.

"Sure you did," came his brutal answer. "But that was your hard luck and my good fortune. I allus knew that some day I would pick up a fortune. I suppose you think I'll pass up that much gold fer a mangy old desert rat. Huh! And the water? They ain't enough fer two; but it'll take me out. You claim to know a lot. Well, let's hear what it is."

All the while, the prospector's hands were lifted. Big Baylor kept the six-gun pointed straight at the other's heart. But just then he saw the older man point with his finger, heard him speak.

"Yeh, yeh," the old man was saying. "I suppose so. I guess you're right. I'll have to make out somehow. Only it ain't fair to an old man. However, I kin tell you the way out of the desert

without much explanation, because most of the confusing directions are behind us. It's simple enough, if you go where I say. In the first place, you travel through that cut that runs ahead of us into them hills, and follow it up until it becomes a young canyon. That'll be about three miles. Then you'll find a rocky break in the range to your left—a very bad-looking place which no one would take if he didn't know. But it's the right one, no matter how it looks. You go through it for several miles, and then you'll find a sort of valley running north and south. Turn north and you'll just naturally find yourself following the base of a ridge that runs straight out. Follow the burro!"

"Yeh? And supposin' I don't—what happens?"

The little man turned suddenly; his eyes narrowed.

"I was just coming to that," he said. "If you don't, you'd keep on up this canyon until you arrive at another gate on the opposite side. It's the wrong way, of course; but you'd think it was the right one. It looks so easy and smooth. But, like the story in the Bible, it's just a bait to lead you into trouble. The grade is like a city pavement for a while, and the climbing is easy. Nothing to it. Only, when you get on the other side——"

"Thanks!"

Simultaneously, Big Baylor did his villainous work. His gun spat twice, straight at the old man's body. Gloatingly he watched the poor prospector reach out as if grasping for eternity, crumple, twist, and fall. Then, the desert rat lay stretched on his face, his boots dug into the sand; his hand clenched.

"So!" exclaimed the big man. "Huh! Of all the fools! Been following that little rat like a puppy, ain't I? Well, I guess that finishes that. Here's where I feed myself to a real drink and give my eyes a peep at the stuff inside that pack. He says there's gold; but he didn't enumerate how much."

This time Baylor helped himself generously, pulling at the spout until he had drained almost a third of the bag. Then, with a grunt of satisfaction, he replaced the stopper and hung it on the pack. That done, he began to lift the canvas, pulling loose the ropes until he disclosed the pokes.

Three sacks of gold!

And three sacks at the current price of sixteen dollars an ounce was a considerable fortune. A grin of contentment spread over his evil countenance. He patted the burro.

"Hey, you long-eared son of mischief!" he cried exultantly. "How do you like that? Well, they don't fool Big Baylor a bit. So you'd better look out. There's enough money in them sacks to make me rich. Pretty soft! Makes me laugh. Here this old sucker works all his life and when he finally picks up a fortune it's for somebody else. And him a wise man! Ho-ho! Him and that book! Said he couldn't be fooled in the desert. Well, I'm thinking he was handed a real package, this time anyway. Wait till I get this pack tied up again, and we'll be movin'! Now that we're rich, I'm hankering to get where we kin spend it. Baby! What a time Big Baylor will have. Wine, women, and song! A pocket of money the rest of my days!"

But before he left, the crook walked over to the prostrate form of the prospector. The man was lying just where he had fallen; dead, without a doubt. Just the same, Big Baylor pulled out his .45 and took careful aim at his victim's head. But all at once he drew back. A thought flashed through his evil mind.

"Huh!" he mumbled. "What's the use? I would only be wasting a bullet, and there's no telling how bad I may need it later on. I might just as well do the job with the butt of my gun."

But here again his plans were sud-

denly interfered with. The little burro, for no reason at all, had all at once turned about and headed for the cut in the line of hills. With an oath, Big Baylor started after the burro and when he caught up with it, it was a hundred yards from the body. Too far to go back! And besides, a new notion had seized him—the desire to hurry along as far as he could before nightfall. The sun was nearing the crest of a western mountain; already the cool shade could be seen in the distant gulches; soon it would be stealing out over the plain. Apparently everything was going along smoothly.

A mile, two miles; then Baylor turned back to look at the stretch at the bottom of the foothills; in the distance he could distinguish the spot where he had killed his man. The thought pleased him immensely; grimly enough, he pictured a posse coming along to discover the bones. The affair would be a mystery. By that time he would be far away, perhaps in San Francisco, or even in New York.

"Yep!" he gloated again. "He was one of these here wise guys. Huh! I wonder who's the wise bird now?"

But up in the narrow canyon the heat was terrible; there was not even a suggestion of breeze; the air lay dead, like that in an oven. In no time Baylor was puffing like a steer. The burro kept plodding along, never stopping; and the pace induced a great thirst. Thank goodness for the water! Big Baylor reached for the sack time and again and drank to his heart's content. As he went farther, the way became steeper; the sides of the canyon presented a weird masonry of colored rock and pillared gypsum. Leading, as it did, slightly to the west, it exposed him to the direct rays of the setting sun, which even at this time of the day were intense. Besides, the crystalline slabs of gypsum blinded him, like a maze of glass, confusing and exhausting. Big Baylor had never been in such a place. He found himself repeating:

"I'm supposed to go up several miles until I find a pass, eh? Turn to my right. Well, this don't look any too good to me. This seems more like a vestibule into Hades. Yeh! Heading fer the hot place—and it sure ain't so far away. Glad I ain't here in midday. And that pass leading out? He said it wasn't none too inviting. It sure can't be."

And it was not.

When Baylor reached the point where the ridge opened to his right, he hesitated and looked about. The hills had been broken down into a mass of boulders tossed about in a million ways. There was no trail, no exit; not a chance to get through except by climbing. Surely, it was just as the desert man had said. No one would have taken it as the way out, unless he knew.

Big Baylor was not to be fooled.

For just two minutes he fought his way over the boulders; then he stopped. Sitting on a big rock, he thought the thing out. Ahead of him, as far as he could see, the terrain was the same. It would take hours of hard work, and besides——

Suddenly, he stopped to scratch his head and mutter. The weary burro was standing between two heaps of gypsum rock, humped and disconsolate. Big Baylor compared the dismal waste with the other trail leading up the canyon. For a tired man, his mode of thinking was entirely reasonable. A thought flashed into his mind.

"Huh!" he said. "He sure was a wise guy. Baylor, old kid, you must be losing your think cap. He said something about the Bible, eh? Said it was the old, old story. And you believed him. But now you're tumbling! We ain't crazy. The way out! Huh! Wanted to fool you, eh? Well, here's where we show the old cuss that we know our stuff."

Big Baylor jumped off the pinnacle, caught hold of the burro's lead rope and turned him in the opposite direction. In a few moments he was back in the old trail leading through the hills. A mile; two miles; and then he made ready to camp. The sun had gone down and darkness set in. After eating, he lay down upon the sand to look up at the stars of the desert night, his hands clasped behind his head in serene contentment. The world was good. In a few days he would be spending a fortune! Twice he took a drink from the bag that lay by his side. The moon rose in pale splendor.

All that night he slept in the cool air of the draw; by morning he was a new man. The hours that had elapsed seemed like so many minutes. There was a faint light, and then a blaze of sunshine in his face. With an exclamation, he leaped to his feet. For a moment he was puzzled as to his whereabouts; then it all came back to him in a rush of recollection.

Yes! He remembered it all. It had seemed like a dream, but it was true. He had been picked up in the desert by a prospector who had struck it rich, and that same man had fooled him with promises of a dry spring ahead. He chuckled at the thought. Now he was rich. The spring? He had forgotten about that. But it did not matter. What really concerned him was the way out. He grinned again. The trusting miner had endeavored to trick him into running into a trap. But such a trick would not work with Big Baylor. He would travel straight ahead until he had arrived at the proper pass. But to start the day off right he would take a big drink of water.

However, when he held up the sack, it had lost a great deal of weight. But what of it? If the burro could get through on practically no water, he ought to make it with almost half a bagful. Only, he would have to hurry. Already the sun's rays were turning the sands into an inferno; the heat waves shot against his blistered face; perspiration was rolling from his forehead. Yet the floor of the chasm was smooth; there was nothing to do but follow behind the patient burro. He trudged behind, therefore, until at last he arrived at the opening on the opposite side of the canyon.

And it was just as the old man had foretold; as easy as an open avenue—a natural pass if ever there was one. The burro turned without a command. Baylor exclaimed:

"Thought he would fool me, eh? Imagined I would fall for the Bible story and get killed? Well, I almost tumbled for it, at that. Never trust anybody, says I. Never!"

Apparently he was correct; the new pass was smooth and inviting; the bends wound around the rocks; and there was scarcely no climbing at all. In fact, it was almost a spillway, dumping him out of the hills with a suddenness that was startling. Before he realized it, he was on the other side and out in a long valley where a ridge ran straight north. Even the path pointed. The sun in the pass had been hot and dazzling; it was good to get out into the open where he could gain a perfect view.

No doubt of it. The burro appeared to know his way; he kept straight on. Big Baylor reached for the sack and took a drink, then he took another. Ahead of him lay a great white waste, dazzling under the intense rays of the burning sun; but it was the place he was looking for; he was aiming for the ridge.

Then, before he knew it he was out in a soda flat, dodging among heaps of crystal débris, twisting here and there where the little burro picked out the trail. Another drink. Another! And at the same time the trail dropped into a depression where the air again lay dead. The temperature mounted with

astounding rapidity; far beyond any that Baylor had ever known. His thirst grew accordingly. The bag diminished; until almost before he knew it there were only three drinks left. Not until then did Big Baylor really worry.

Three drinks!

Surely, the depression could not last forever. And yet it went on and on; and as it continued, the patient burro plodded on its way. The big man knew only too well that eventually the little animal would lead him to some kind of a spring. He would have to pull himself together and conserve the water—a difficult task at the most, and to a man like himself almost impossible. All his life he had taken what he wanted; he had denied himself nothing. Now, his training went against him. Before he realized it, he was presenting a dozen arguments why he should consume the water. Soon his desires had triumphed. The bag went up. And it was as the old man had said.

His lips were glued to the spout; he had intended to take only a small drink, but before he could check himself he had doubled the allowance. The last drop trickled out on his tongue. And he was still thirsty!

However, he was refreshed. If he could push the donkey fast enough, he would still get out; there surely ought to be a spring ahead somewhere. This place could not last. But apparently it did. An hour passed, two, and then Big Baylor began to droop. The inferno of heat had become a blistering caldron; the donkey plodded on with miraculous persistence. Soon Big Baylor began to run the regular gamut of desert thirst. His tongue grew thick; his legs weakened; by turns he was hot and cold; the landscape, objects, and images, began running together. Little by little he became aware that he had deceived nobody but himself. All the while he kept thinking about the gold; it urged him on. Clinging to the burro's neck, he staggered with its gait, clutching with a grip of steel. The burden of his thoughts was:

"I gotta get through! I gotta get through! I'm a rich man. Yeh, a rich one! The old crook! He—he—I see it now. He knew all the while I would follow this way. He lied, and he wasn't fair. He——"

He was still mumbling when the way turned again; in another moment, they were out in a soda flat. But Big Baylor knew nothing of that; the slight grade had been too much; a rock caught against his foot and tripped him up.

The burro was gone!

The crook had fallen with his face down; but he was still fighting, pushing ahead on his hands and knees. The world went black; he lost consciousness.

But that was not the end.

Another awakening came to Big Baylor; this time he heard many voices; some low, others high. The air had changed; things were different. His mouth seemed easy; his throat was moist. The only thing that bothered him was the fact that his arms were tied behind him. For a moment it puzzled him; until it suddenly dawned upon him that he was a prisoner.

A prisoner?

Yes. And the words of the speakers told how. A voice rose above the others; a voice of explanation. The voice of a ghost. Big Baylor was sure of that, because he had seen the man fall. And yet——

"You see," the speaker was saying, "I never take any chances in the desert, for the simple reason that if there's any yellow in a man's make-up, it will crop out here. This country strips a man's mind naked. And, on the other hand, neither do I refuse to help anybody. It's a plain duty. And so it was in this case. I found the fellow dying, helped him through, and gave him the same chance I would have given any honest man.

Only, before I picked him up that first time, I fixed his gun."

"Hey!" came a rougher voice. "You fixed it? How?"

"With blanks," came the answer. "I allus carry a stack of them harmless things in my pack, you see? It pays. Then, if the man I pick up happens to be an honest man, it doesn't hurt him a bit. But, on the other hand, if he turns out to be a crook——"

"I see. But that being the case, why didn't you plug him when he stuck you up?"

Again came the old man's voice.

"I was just coming to that. I could have done it easy, of course. Only, just then I was thinking on bringing him to justice, alive; and I wanted to teach him a lesson. Besides, I hankered to try something I had thought out from reading that book. A crook will be a crook, says I; and if so, he will only reason from lies. So, I just told him the truth to try him out. And—well, you know the rest.

"He simply couldn't believe that I would tell him the real way out. And so he just naturally did the wrong thing. He went into the left-hand path and headed into the salt beds. And that route went up the valley, around the hills, right to the point where he had started from. I was waiting. The donkey came all by himself: just as I figured. And the spring and the water were close at hand. All I had to do was to head back and pick him up at the end of the salt basin. Of course, I had to cache the pack to make room for his body; but I can go back after it any time. Then, when I came through this way, I ran onto you and the posse. I might have expected as much—this fellow had all the earmarks of a man wanted by a sheriff!"

ALASKA'S FIRST DUDE RANCH

DUDE ranches have, during the past few years, become increasingly common in the Western part of the United States. Alaska, however, has until recently been quite immune to this picturesque brand of ranch. In fact, the first dude ranch in the country has just been established near Petersburg, Alaska.

And the ranch is the direct result of the increasing number of tourists who yearly visit the Petersburg region. These visitors wish, during the summer and autumn, to see the natural sights from horseback, so the present up-to-date camp has been provided to take care of them.

The Trail To Paradise

By Jackson Gregory

Synopsis of Preceding Chapters.

GARRY MONCTON aids his cousin Steve, wanted for a killing in Westwood, by riding his horse. On the way to his newly purchased ranch he learns from Joe Miner why Steve wants to escape. Presently, Garry is captured by Bob Ballinger, timberman, and taken to Jim Paradise's place. Ballinger loves Jim's daughter Eve, whose attention is now attracted to Garry. Sheriff Brand arrives, takes Garry in charge, and later secretly releases him, urging haste. At the "Sun Dodger's" cabin, Garry finds Steve, with a bullet hole in his head. Brand arrives, questions Garry, and believes him innocent of the death. Garry suddenly realizes Steve did not shoot himself, but was shot. He tells Eve, and writes something on a paper which he gives her to keep for him. Heading homeward again, Garry encounters Ballinger, taxes him with having spent the night at the Sun Dodger's, and disarms him. Garry reaches his ranch and finds Miner there. The place is boarded up. They decide to break in.

CHAPTER VII.

BIG CHIEF ON THE WARPATH.

THERE is no desolation more profound than that of an abandoned house in a mountainous solitude. Garry Moncton, with Joe Miner stepping softly in his wake, went from room to room. Doors and windows were opened to the in-gush of fresh air and sunlight. The two men were silent, absorbed in their search for whatever signs of any kind the vanished Phil Kent might have left behind him. They found an alarm clock; it had run down. They looked at it closely; an eight-day clock. Of course, that did not mean necessarily that Phil had been away eight days, but it hinted at some considerable stretch of time. In the kitchen were scraps of food, dry and moldy. Black, charred bits of wood were in the fireplace. Neither marked order nor disorder anywhere, just the to-be-expected condition

where a man let his house keep itself. A book lying open, face down, on a crude table; a litter of newspapers; a magazine or two. A pipe, tobacco tins both empty and full; a discarded hat, an old pair of boots. Little else.

"Didn't leave a letter anywhere as I notice," observed Joe, when they had completed their tour of the rooms and came out upon the wide front porch again.

"Not exactly," said Garry, and sat down on the old bench made of crooked manzanita wood and sapling poles. He looked not at his companion but rather into some great distance beyond the bold crests of the peaks.

"Of course you noticed the dates on the papers?" said Joe, thinking that perhaps that was what Garry had in mind.

"Of course. Not much help there. Around May first. About the time he wrote me. He went to town that day, I suppose; mailed his letter, and picked up some papers."

"No, that ain't much, but I guess it's about all we draw, Garry. Kind of funny, too."

Garry did not answer. There was a deep cleft between his drawn brows, and it grew deeper. Joe started to speak, narrowed his eyes speculatively, and diverted his activities toward producing and going to work on a cut of tobacco. But he considered prolonged silence the gift and attribute of beasts and no fit occupation for man, and he grew restive.

"How come you're riding out in the open this a way, Garry? Willing by now to be rounded up?"

Garry looked over toward him as though he had forgotten the little man's presence. His question he ignored utterly; his mind was elsewhere and was not lightly to be turned aside.

"Steve did leave a message, after all," he said thoughtfully. "That's what's got me bothered, Joe."

Joe stared incredulously. "I didn't see it——"

"You saw it—but it couldn't mean anything on earth to any one but Phil, and Steve, and me. Poor old Steve's out of it; I wonder about Phil? Here I am understanding what he had to say, all right, and yet, in a way I'm in the dark."

"By me," grunted Joe wonderingly. "Blind, I guess."

"It was that broken willow stick," he got for further mystification until the words which followed turned on the light. "Strange how things happen! Only this very morning, for the first time in many a year, I was talking about how the three of us boys played together. We played Indian, Joe; there was the Big Chief who was forever scalping good white men and their wives and babies; there was the Little Chief who was always the white man's friend; there was Pale Face, a redoubtable Indian scout. Got that, Joseph?"

"I can listen good even when I can't hear sense in it," said Joe mildly.

"Little Chief always kicked in to help out Pale Face. He knew, you know, when Big Chief was on the warpath; he could be trusted to snake his way through all the vindictive tribes and bring the warning. Know what his sign was, Joe?"

Joe's eyes goggled. "A broken stick!"

"If there'd been but the one, I'd have wondered if it was a coincidence only. But there was another stick like it by the fireplace, Joe; maybe you didn't even notice it? With the rest of the firewood."

"No, Garry; I didn't. A man wouldn't, would he? What's it mean, Garry?"

"Would to Heaven I knew! In the old days it meant only one thing; that always: 'Look out. Danger. Big Chief on the warpath.'"

Joe showed his direct mind. "Whyn't he leave a letter?"

Garry shrugged. But there was nothing of levity in the gesture.

"Let's go look 'em over again, Garry. We might have missed it; a paper stuck somewhere."

They found no such help. But later, going over the premises about the house, they found between them no less than five more broken willow wands. Near the gate of the corral, at the spring, near the kitchen door, at the stable, and by the old tumble-down tool shed. If anything on earth was clear it was that Phil Kent, very much in earnest, meant to convey some sort of warning to one of his old playmates, and that he had haply hit upon a signal that either of them would understand, should memory in them be as strong as in him and should it happen to lie sufficiently close to the surface to be reawakened by his willow wands. And yet nothing was less clear than what lay back of that warning.

"Tell me, Garry," said Joe a second time, now out of a long silence, "how's it happen you don't seem exactly on the dodge any longer? Don't care if you get caught, or what?"

Garry told him briefly. Never a better listener than Joe Miner, mouth open, eyes bright with interest. He made no reference to Steve, unless it by chance lay in his exclamation when, squirming where he sat, he burst out with angry vehemence:

"That Ballinger's dirt, and I say it! And if I ever line him up over my sights I ain't going to miss him like I did you."

"What's he done to you? He's not far off, by the way; about two miles from here, or was when I rode up just now."

"Ballinger that close?" Joe made a wry face and something of the bluster of his attitude oozed out of him. "It's not what he's done to me, Garry; it's what he's said promiscuous that he was going to do." He sighed windily. "Like I told you, there's a woman mixed up in it."

On a gayer day Garry would have laughed at him.

"You and Bob Ballinger rivals? And he's threatened to beat you up and wreck your manly beauty for all time if you don't quit cutting in on his girl!"

"Nary. Nothing like that. Ballinger's clean dippy over Eve Paradise, and everybody, including her old man—who don't like it—knows. But I've remarked in a lifetime of watching how things go that the old gent in question never does seem to fall for the guy his daughter makes eyes at, and I guess Ballinger'll get her, all right. But that ain't here, there, nor the other place with me. The woman in this case ain't any girl at all and hasn't been since long before Judd Jenkins cleared the earth of her helpmate that didn't help. I'm speaking, Mr. Moncton, as you may surmise, of her as is known as 'Jenkin's Widow.'"

He took off his straw hat, mopped his odd-shaped bald head, put the hat back with emphasis as he demanded:

"Why does a smart man do fool things?"

"You're the smart man, I take it?"

"Well, for the sake of argument, we'll say so. I used to think it; I'm not so dead sure right now, though. Anyway, here's the way it goes: I'm fooling around the courthouse not so long ago, dropping in to see Jake Hawbury, him they call 'Hogberry,' that's in jail account of a small ruckus, and I gets to chatting with the boys I know around those diggings. I pick up some scraps of news that way; one got me started on what I judged was a hunch and later regard as a mistake. Somebody in the county clerk's office or somewhere had got a letter, and little Slyke, he's a shitepoke pettifogger lawyer, he'd horned in on it and gossip was spreading that maybe Jenkins' Widow was about to fall heir to a wad of money. Ten thousand, some said; some haw-

hawed at that and said fifty thousand. Most generally, you know, when there's a smell of whisky, there's a still.

"I rides home, thinking whyn't anybody ever leave me a bunch of money like that. When I get started thinking, Garry, I think hard. Says I, that widow woman which according to say-so ain't any more overburdened with brains than Heaven gave geese, won't know what to do with a fortune. She needs a man to take care of it for her. I didn't know her by sight, but folks said if she was short on brains the balance was kept as usual by good looks. I moseys along home thinking and, if you will have it, drinking a mite. I'd got a jug in town. The result of them processes was what might be expected—inspiration. I wrote her a nice letter, making an honorable proposition of matrimony, and I described myself as desirable, which I guess I am, and I signed it Joseph Miner. Well, Garry, it drawed an answer as quick as honey draws flies. She'd heard of me, that woman says, and she's interested; and she'd like mighty well to see me or my picture.

"Now, I sets in with my jug, being jug No. 2, and figures it all out. I also looked myself over like a hesitating woman might, which is to say with penetrating eyes. It dawns on me all of a sudden pretty much like a streak of greased lightning that I ain't as young as I thought I was; maybe not as young as I'd let on in my epistle matrimonial.

"And what do I do then? Well, I guess I must have been plain drunk by then, Garry." He sighed very deeply and looked distressed. "I figured on fooling her with a fake picture, so much being at stake, as you might say. I even sort of mistily had it doped out how we'd have a romantic wedding by moonlight, with the moon not quite full at that and a cloud or two if it might be. And the picture?

"That's where that low-life Ballinger comes in. He's good looking, Garry, that I'll admit. He knows it. He's plain stuck on himself. They say he'd rather look in a looking-glass than eat. And some time ago, before him and Eve Paradise began to hit it up, he got himself a baker's dozen photographs and handed 'em to about all the girls in the mountains that it didn't hurt your eyes to look at. Millie Seedler, she had one, and I went poking over to talk to "Old Man" Seedler about selling him a heifer calf I didn't have, and swiped the picture and wrote 'with love' on it and sent it along to Jenkins' Widow. And the same day I got that fixed I called on Hogberry, still in jail, and heard some more gossip, and it turns out that it wasn't Jenkins' Widow at all, her being Mrs. Ferguson by name, but another woman named Ferguson, married to the brother of Jenkins' Widow's late departed, that was going to get all that money!

"Which hurt, Garry, and is catalogued as Hurt No. 1. Comes No. 2: Jenkins' Widow accepts me and wants I should marry her right away! Comes No. 3, which is when I don't respond, and she says she's coming up to my place! Gosh, Garry, if I'd had any hair left I'd have shed it right then. And that wasn't all. I took to the brush, same as you found me, and I run across a fellow I know, and he tells he the story's got all around about Ballinger's picture, and he's took it ugly and is looking for me. And there you have the whole works, and begin to reckon I'm a true friend, since I came poking back this way to do you a favor, with Ballinger, as you tell me, not more'n couple of miles away."

But already Ballinger had doubled that distance between them. At first, half crazed with rage, he had followed Garry to retrieve his rifle. By the time he had it, he had cooled just enough to begin asking himself questions. Everything Moncton had told him might be

lies. On the other hand, it might all be the truth. That thought gave Ballinger pause. And so it was that instead of riding onto the Mountain Meadow, he rode hard in the other direction. He located his timber cruiser and sent him on the run to gather up half a dozen of the timberjacks not a mile away where they were establishing a new camp. Ballinger himself, leaving curt and savage orders behind him, turned down to Paradise. It was his thought to overhaul the sheriff, or to learn direct from Paradise or Eve exactly what had happened, and wherein, if anywhere, as he so devoutly hoped, Garry Moncton lied. His orders to his men were to surround the Mountain Meadow house, if Moncton was there; to keep an eye on him, wherever they found him; not to let him go until Ballinger said so. If he got ugly, bore him; Bob Ballinger stood back of the order and all responsibility.

He rode his horse hard that day and even so his rage rode harder and made the round trip many times before him. And not over halfway to Echo Canyon, as he raced around a sharp turn in his trail, he met Eve Paradise.

"I was just on my way to see you, Eve," he burst out.

A somewhat unusual seriousness which was in her eyes when they met passed away, and she laughed at him.

"Goodness me, Bob!" she exclaimed merrily. "I never knew until now that you rode like that just to come to see me. It quite takes my breath away—your horse's breath, too, poor thing."

"About this fellow, Moncton," began Ballinger eagerly.

"Well?" she asked lightly, though the serious look came back into her eyes.

"He—— Where are you going on this trail, Eve?" he demanded sharply and, it may be, with sudden suspicion.

She laughed at him again.

"What's come over you, Bob Ballinger? What's wrong with this trail? Let's say that I'm going for a ride."

By now he had glimpsed her little black bag.

"Somebody sick up this way?" he asked, and his tone suggested that his own new thought had mollified him.

Eve, quite as the original Eve would have done, no doubt, snatched an opportunity made to her hand to tease the mere man. She had the trick of demureness to perfection.

"It was one of Mrs. Ferguson's children, Bob. I've just come from there. Only a tummyache, and so nothing for you to worry about."

"For me to worry about?" he said as offhandedly as he could, though she knew the first little dart had gone home.

"Why, of course," said Eve innocently. "You're interested in the whole family, aren't you, Bob? How many are there? I always forget; nine or eleven? Oh, Bob Ballinger, I never knew what a heartless Don Juan you were! What if I had allowed my young and foolish heart——"

"Eve! For pity's sake, Eve!"

For he did love her, loved her so that his love for her could at one moment lift him to the stars, at another drive a stake through his heart.

"I saw your photo, Bob. She's so proud——"

"One of these days, when I get my two hands on that little rat Joe Miner, I——"

A gay breeze of her laughter whipped his words away.

"Why do you treat me this way, Eve?" Something of reproach was in his tone, something of downright pleading, at least a shadow of sullenness. "I'd go to the world's end for you, and you know it. I——"

"Do you mean that, Bob? What if I ask a favor? Will you just promise to be friends with Mr. Moncton?"

Ballinger's eyes, which had begun to brighten, grew hard and savage.

"What's he to you? A cur and a murderer!"

"He's neither! He's fine. I knew it the minute I saw him. One could tell."

"I saw him looking at you last night," muttered Ballinger. "I saw you looking at him. I—— Eve, this man doesn't mean anything to you! You can't mean anything to him—yet. You and I——"

"Are friends, Bob," said the girl, becoming gentle all of a sudden as she glimpsed the pain so unhidden in the man's eyes. "The very best of friends."

"No," said Ballinger heavily. "Not friends, Eve. I won't have it. I—I'd rather have you hate me. But listen to me: This fellow Moncton is——"

"Let me be the one to tell you!" she cried quickly. "You have seen him this morning? Something happened!" she flashed out, as she read his eyes and saw the angry color mount in his cheeks. "What was it, Bob? Not—you haven't—oh, tell me!" she ended impatiently.

"Not much of anything," grunted Ballinger. "Yes, I saw him. Riding free and talking wide. How's it happen, Eve? Did Brand, the skunk that he is, let him go?"

"It's a story of fine courage and true manhood," she told him warmly, her young, romantic fancies caught. And very swiftly she told him of Steve, of the part Garry had played, and of the tragedy of last night.

"And you told him I was at the 'Sun Dodger's,'" said Ballinger slowly and in dull monotone, faintly accusing. "You tried to make him think I killed his cousin. That I'd shoot and hide!"

"Bob! I did nothing of the kind! Before I thought, it just popped out that you had told me you were going to stop overnight at that cabin. That's all, Bob. I told him I knew you too well to suspect you of a thing like that."

"Thanks," he said dryly. Then of a sudden, inspired by a great, bitter, and consuming jealousy which in great part made him the man he was, Ballinger exclaimed: "You're on your way to see him now?"

Eve, seeing how deeply the man was stirred, a man whom she liked sincerely and was on the way toward more than merely liking, now answered him very gently.

"It's only fair play, Bob. Listen. While I was at Jenkins' Widow's place, Mr. Adams came by. He had got wind of the most terrible distorted tale. How do all the hideous rumors flash up and down over the world as they do? Like electrical currents! He had heard that Mr. Moncton had escaped, half killing the sheriff; that he had murdered some other man at the Sun Dodger's cabin; that he was again fleeing deeper into the mountains. Where did he get all that? Caught a true word from some one and built all the rest of the lies on it?"

"I don't know and don't care. Why should you care, Eve?"

She spoke less gently when she answered him.

"He's done no wrong, and he deserves fair play along with all men! He must know what is being said. He would be riding all unsuspectingly into danger. He'd not surrender the next time; lives might be lost——"

"It's his look-out," said Ballinger, fierce and angry-eyed. "A man was killed last night at the Sun Dodger's, wasn't he? This fellow Moncton was there, wasn't he? Can't you see it, girl? The mountains would be all the cleaner rid of him. You'll not go on, Eve! I say, you'll not go to him!"

She looked very cool as she sat there looking at him, her chin up, her brows raised. And yet there was a hint of higher coloring in her own cheeks.

"I've asked a favor, Mr. Ballinger," she reminded him coldly. "I don't ask twice. And, now, if you'll give me room to pass, I'll carry my own messages."

"Eve!" It was a cry from the depths,

from the turmoil of a man's soul. There were stress, and fury, and confusion; there were eddies of strong emotion deep down in the inner man that was Bob Ballinger, a man at the crossroads of his life. Love, hate, with jealousy between, sent a dizzying fume into his brain. So he gasped out: "Eve!" And added in a strange voice: "You're not throwing me over, are you, Eve? I'm in your hands; can't you see it? I'm a strong man, a man who could knock the stars out of the sky for you. And I'm in your hands. You could twist me into whatever shape, straight, and good, and clean, or crooked and bad, you wanted. Go slow, Eve, for Heaven's sake!"

About to press by him, she hesitated. The man's love was honest. She knew him well. There was much good in him; there was some bad. Did she love him? Had she not rather been on the verge of loving him and was now wondering at herself for being so, and drawing ever so little backward from that verge?

"It's only a simple thing I am doing," she said quietly. "You, as a fair man, know that."

"No. It's not so little; it's not so simple. I can feel it—in here." He struck his deep chest with his clenched fist. "I saw you look at him. I saw him look at you. By Heaven," he burst out, dominated by a terrible gust of anger, "you'll not go to him! I have his place surrounded now by my men. If he's killed it'll be an accident and a mistake and——"

She had her own temper, and it flared up then.

"I'll tell him you said that! I'll tell him to look out for you and your men. I've told him already you were at the cabin! I—— Pull aside, Bob Ballinger!"

She touched her horse with the spurs and shot by him, racing uptrail, leaving him there staring after her.

CHAPTER VIII.

GARRY TAKES UP THE TRAIL.

YOU are my first visitor," cried Garry welcomingly, and ran down the steps to meet her. "That's a good omen!"

Eve laughed at him and dismounted before he could get to her side with a proffer of a hand down.

"I seem to glimpse an old friend of mine peering out of a window," she retorted brightly. "So I'm afraid that you're merely being nice and polite, and that I'm not the first."

"Oh, me?" said a voice, and Joe Miner, seeing that Eve came alone and that already he had betrayed his presence, popped his head out into full view. "I'm no visitor, Miss Eve. I'm only the hired man. Garry is taking me on——"

"First I'd heard of it," said Moncton. "But so let it be. Come in, Miss Paradise."

"I love it here," she told him, having run up the steps and turning to look down on him as he mounted after her. "One of my favorite rides has always been up this way. There's a tiny gem of a lake just out of sight over yonder. Of course you know it? It's on this ranch, I believe."

"What name, this lake's, do you know?" he asked her curiously.

"It hasn't any that I know. Too little, maybe. And perhaps it's just as well; such terrible names get wished on so many of our mountain places, canyons, valleys, and so on. Chinaman's Valley, for example, is a place of beauty and a joy forever; so is Wild Hog Ravine."

"My lake has a name, though," he informed her, "that does it proud: Lake Eve. Like it?"

"Adore it!" she confessed, along with a quick little nod which accepted the courtesy. She was used, he knew already, to having a pretty general tribute paid her. "Thank you, Mr. Moncton."

"Will you come inside? Things are

rather of a mess, I'm afraid. Or shall we sit out here? Anyway, I wish you'd take off your spurs and make it a real visit. How, by the way, did the doctor find the sick child?"

"Better. Quite well, I might say. Often, I work quite remarkable cures that way, even before I arrive. You see, little Bertie knew I had been sent for and——"

"Castor oil in the black bag?" he asked.

"Clairvoyant? Yes, it was. And Bertie must have guessed."

She sat down on the bench; Garry sat on the top step with his back to one of the up-ended log columns and approved her. Joe Miner made a cautious appearance, joining them after having reconnoitered, and stationed himself close to the open door.

"Howdy, Miss Eve," he made his tardy greetings. "I'd like to remark, being allowed, that you're looking more so than usual to-day."

"Joe," she told him as sternly as a pair of intriguing dimples permitted, "when your turn comes to depart this nice world of ours, the Prince of Darkness is going to be waiting to grab you by the hair." Joe grinned and snatched off his hat, bending his bare pate forward for her better view, and she laughed at him. "You're a mischief-making rascal, Mr. Joe Miner," she continued. "I was at Widow Ferguson's just before I came here. You've got that poor soul all a-twitter with your nonsense."

Then before Joe could answer, she turned to Garry, and he understood with something of a start that all her gayety had been merely a bright cloak over some sober concern.

"I really came on what you might call business," she told him seriously.

"I'm sorry," he said quickly. "I was hoping you were just being neighborly."

"I am. It's a neighborly errand, after all."

Very briefly she explained what brought her; what she had heard Old Man Adams say.

"The truth gets so terribly twisted, doesn't it? It struck me that you should know without delay. Do you know, for instance, that there are men now scattered about among the trees watching to make sure that you don't get away?"

It was news to him and his brows went up; her words, however, made no such impression upon him as upon Joe Miner. That worthy in a flash whipped back through the door, so vanishing.

"Ballinger and his crowd, of course?" said Garry.

"Heaven save us!" came Joe's prayer from the window.

"Not Bob and his crowd," said Eve slowly, finding difficulty in the situation which she herself had made. Oh, why did men have to fly at one another's throats like wild beasts? Well, she was in for it, having blazed her own trail thus far, and must get on with it. "I met Bob on my way here," she continued. "He had seen you; he was not sure that it was quite all right for you to be free——"

"I told him plainly enough."

"He didn't know what to believe. I told him, too. But he had already left word here that you were to be watched. I left him and rode on here to tell you that——"

"And Ballinger didn't come back with you?" Garry asked sharply.

"No."

"Even after you told him how matters stood, he couldn't see it?"

"Bob is—difficult," she admitted, wanting to be loyal to an old friend, yet seeing so clearly that old friend's bitter intolerance and prejudice. "I am sorry you have had trouble with him twice already."

"Twice? Ballinger told you?"

"Luke Epperly did. He is Bob's timber cruiser. He says that he saw you ride up on Bob this morning. He

couldn't hear all that was said; but he says he saw enough to guess at the words."

Garry shrugged, having nothing to offer. She waited for him, bending forward in an attitude of eagerness, at last leaning back again with a sigh.

"You didn't strike him with the quirt, Luke says. I almost think it would have hurt Bob less if you had. I begged Luke not to say anything to the other boys, but he only grinned. Oh, why did all this have to happen?"

"I'm as sorry as a man can be," he assured her soberly, seeing her distress. "I don't want trouble with Ballinger; I can't quite see why he has it in for me, can you?"

Her eyes drifted away to the distant mountaintops. Garry leaped to his feet and stood over her.

"This is mighty good of you," he said earnestly. "I see something of how it is; I know it's hard for you, with Ballinger an old friend and me just a Johnny-come-lately. It's in the name of neighborliness that you do this thing for me; more than that, it's in the name of square dealing. In return, I'll do all that a man can. There's no question of any sort of trouble between Ballinger and me if it can possibly be avoided. And I am truly grateful to you for coming."

By way of comment they had Joe's snort from the window. And after the snort came Joe's declaration:

"If that guy hankers after trouble you'll have to make up your mind to it or to letting him wipe his dirty boots on you."

"I've told Luke how things stand," said Eve, and stood up, her call plainly at an end. "He'll not go counter to Bob's orders, and he wouldn't withdraw the boys. But he has explained to them, too. And, of course, Bob will realize that he's made a mistake and will call them off. Perhaps he has already done so."

Thus she dismissed the subject and her manner of seriousness, speaking in quite another tone, light and casual, as she asked:

"I know Mr. Kent slightly; is he here?"

"No," said Garry, and one might almost have fancied that as the shadows passed from her countenance, to leave it smiling and sunny, they gathered gloomily on his. "I expected to find him here. He's gone. I don't understand it."

"You know him personally? I merely supposed you were buying from him."

"He bought for me, rather. I couldn't come at the time, and Phil needed the mountain air; an old bullet hole through the lung, you know. Know him? Remember how I told you of the three boys that used to play together? Phil was the third."

He was about to add: "And he's gone and I'm afraid something's wrong. House boarded up; warning signals all over the place," but realized that this would be to burden her still further with his own troubles, and so fell silent.

She was at last looking at him intently.

"You are not telling me the whole of it," she said impulsively, then bit her lip and added hastily: "Of course, there's no reason why you should. I didn't mean to pry——" She broke off there and tried to laugh herself out of a tangle. She felt herself making too much of nothing; almost insisting on confidences.

"There is every reason why I should tell you anything you care to know, and be proud of your interest," Garry said in a manner which somehow gave her an impression of old-fashioned courtliness. She had read her books, first under "Tootle's" eye, later as romantic predilections led, and had a fondness for

> Ye dayes of olde
> When knightes were bolde,
> And ladies verie fayre.

"Some time, then, you will tell me all about Mr. Phil Kent's mysterious ab-

sence," she said lightly and ran down the steps. "I promised Jimmie I'd be right back; he'll be thinking a wild cat got me. Good-by, Mr. Moncton. Adios, Mr. Miner; better mend your ways——"

"Wait a moment, please," Garry called after her, and went to stand at her horse's side as she mounted. "As long as you do know Phil, will you tell me what you can about him? When you saw him last, for one thing?"

She was far too alert to miss an undernote of uneasiness.

"You are afraid that something has happened to him?"

"I have no reason for any such fear. Or rather—oh, I'm puzzled; I guess that's all. He knew I was coming, you see; and I found the place reeking with desertion, doors nailed up, and nothing to inform me where he's gone. Or when he left. It might help if you had seen him lately."

She bent her head in meditation.

"I think I can tell you exactly when I saw Mr. Kent last," she said presently. "It was a Sunday forenoon about—let's see. To-day's Sunday, isn't it? Two weeks ago to-day. I was out for a ride and met him on the trail. He was returning from a trip out for provisions. We stopped, of course, for a few words. He didn't say anything, though, about going away."

"Can you remember what was said? Any little chance-dropped word that might have a hint in it of what he had in mind? You see, I had a letter from him, asking me to hurry along. He must have mailed the letter in town that day."

"Not that day; the day before," she corrected him. "You see, it was reasonably early when I met him and he had a pack horse pretty well loaded down. It would be a good six hours into town. I remember that we spoke of that; that he said he had gone into town on some business the day before, had stayed overnight there, and got an early start the next morning. I suppose he started about three or four o'clock Sunday."

"And that was all? That was said, I mean?"

She wrinkled her brows, questing for any trifle that might help.

"I think so. I really haven't thought of the thing since. Yes; I'm pretty sure that's all."

"Nothing about what his business was?"

She shook her head. "Just provisioning, I think."

"I'm going to make the same trip early in the morning," said Garry. "Maybe he'll turn up before I go, or I'll get word from him somehow. There may even be another letter, waiting for me at the post office. I didn't inquire on my way here," he added with a smile, as he stepped back and withdrew his detaining hand from her horse's mane.

Starting an hour before dawn the next morning, Garry rode into the forty-mile-distant county seat at an early hour. The place was hardly more than a drowsy village little affected by the recent busy years which go rushing at everything with improvement and ultra-modernism in their hands; a straggling, sprawling little settlement which dozed through most sunny days, dreaming of its own hectic and riotous past. The whole county was idling in a betweenwhiles. Gone was all the rushing stream of miners who had made life hereabouts a lively affair; the stock-raising business was at a lull; only at its beginnings the lumbering industry. In what was known as Old Town stood the characteristic houses of California Auriphrygiate; small, crude, masonry fortresses with their iron shutters and doors, left empty, deserted, desolate. The river, running deep and swift, full of foam and fury signifying destruction to the unwary, separated Old Town from that portion of the community which more nearly approximated belonging to the

present, and was crossed by two wooden bridges.

Garry rode along a quiet street straight to the courthouse, an unsightly though solid pile with the date of its erection, 1890, chiseled in the gray granite over the deep door. The door stood open; the janitor was bringing forth some hose to water the little gopher-infested side lawn.

"Anybody here yet?" Garry asked him.

"Two-three. Just openin' up. Slyke's here; him an' Hatfield just come. So's Bill Murphy. Want to see any of them?"

Garry meant to see a number of men before the day was over; he thought that he could begin with one as well as another and entered the courthouse. Two of the names mentioned were not entirely unknown to him; he recalled Hatfield as the physician whom Eve had spoken of, Slyke as a pestiferous rat of a shyster lawyer or something to that effect as rated by Joe Miner. With Slyke, so far as he knew, he had nothing to do. With the doctor it might be otherwise.

But before he came to either of these two he saw a door standing open under the legend "County Recorder," and stepped in there A ruddy-faced, cheery sort of man was opening an enormous book, whistling the while as though going to work among these dusty files was as invigorating as a nice cold shower.

"Know all about it," he said briskly before Garry had more than half made his wants clear "All shipshape and in order. Deed to the Mountain Meadow ranch, recorded, indexed, filed. Book 89-A." He flopped a volume open. "Page 390. Title was searched, found clear." He smiled and added: "No joker in the deck anywhere along the line. Fine property, too. Mr. Kent explained to me that he was merely acting as agent. Deed in the name of Garrison John Moncton. That would be you?" And only now did an interest other than purely professional show itself in a quick gleam of his eyes.

"Yes. And, by the way, I expected to see Phil at the ranch and he wasn't there. Since you know him, do you happen to know where he is?"

The recorder knew nothing of Phil's plans. Nor, obviously, was he half as much interested in them as in a man who bore the name of Moncton, a name which had passed up and down these halls during gossip hours a good deal since yesterday noon.

"Haven't seen him for a coon's age," he said casually as he set his book aside and set his elbows on his high desk, prepared for a morning chat. But Garry disappointed him, and went on his way.

That way led him almost into collision with a rather pompous old fellow who at the moment burst out of a corridor, looking not in the least where he was going but over his shoulder at some one to whom he was flinging the words:

"The only opinion that you'll ever get out of me, Slyke, is that you're a danged nosey impertinent busybody!"

He was a robustious old chap in the shiniest black suit Garry had ever seen and the dirtiest white Panama hat.

"I beg pardon," said Garry, stepping back. "Dr. Hatfield?"

"And suppose I am?" trumpeted the doctor. "What of it?"

"I wonder if you could give me a moment? My name is Moncton——"

Dr. Hatfield eyed him keenly, pursed his lips, and then nodded vigorously.

"To be sure I can, Mr. Moncton. Garry Moncton, isn't it? Oliver Brand has told me of you. Suppose we step up to his office? I've an appointment with him for this morning; I'm a speck early, but he ought to be along any minute."

He led the way and Garry, following him to the steps which led to the second floor, saw the man who must be Slyke, since he darted out on that same corridor down which Dr. Hatfield had sent

his angry words and his baleful backward glance, and since, further, he looked like Slyke! For from Joe's words, from Dr. Hatfield's, Garry was quite prepared for a thin wasp of a man, black-haired, black-eyed, nervous, and alert, and altogether the composite picture of the various attributes of cunning.

"Though Oliver isn't here yet," said the doctor as they mounted the stairs, "one of his men is. Jail's next door and some one always sleeps in the room back of Oliver's office. Come in. And now, what can I do for you?"

The door had been open; Hatfield had dropped into a chair, of which there were several, calling another to Garry's attention with a nod.

"I'm a cousin of Steve Moncton's," Garry told him. "The sheriff mentioned your name, and I judged that if any examination of any kind were made, you'd be the man?"

"Exactly. I did the job late yesterday. Brand is a careful man, and he knows his business. All's not gold that glitters, and not all are suicides that look like suicides. That's one question you want to ask, isn't it?"

"Yes. I had meant to ask Brand. I suppose it's all right to ask you?"

"Hrumph," or something like that, said Dr. Hatfield. "Of course it's all right. They've never made a muzzle yet in this county, my boy, that fits me. Suicide or murder, is the question. Answer? I don't know, haven't the least idea, and don't give a—— Never mind that part of it. All the wound shows is that the shot was fired from close up. The gun wasn't jammed against the head; might have been held out for him to look in the barrel; might have been held by his hand or another's. You're going to ask if we've heard about finger prints up here? You can go ask Charlie Miller; you'd think he's the man that invented the system. No doubt, they'll find finger prints all over the gun, and they'll all be your cousin's, and won't prove anything one way or the other. Next?"

"I think that that is all. Thank you."

"Left-handed, Brand said you said. Right. Muscular development told that at a glance. And that's all, you say? Sorry I couldn't earn a fee by really telling you something. Seen my little girl yet?"

He was such a rapid-fire old fellow that Garry was kept busy following him when he kept to the subject.

"Eve Paradise," the doctor told him before he could ask.

"Oh," said Garry. "Yes, I've seen her."

"What do you think of her?"

"Why, I think she's fine. She——"

"I should say she is. So mighty fine she comes close to being a curse to creation. Bless my soul, how the young dogs go off their heads over her! They'll be shooting one another over her before long, I presume. Had time to fall in love with her?"

"Is it a question of time?" parried Garry. "I'm not greatly experienced. I believe that that great authority on all things human wrote in this connection, 'Who ever loved that loved not at first sight?' "

"The sweet Bard of Avon! You read him, sir? Your hand; in these degenerate days, it's a pleasure. Do you play chess?"

"Only after a fash——"

"I'll come out and spend a week with you some time. We'll have chess and Shakespeare and Charlie Dickens. Call on me for anything. Maybe I can begin now. You wanted to see Brand, I take it? Step with me as far as the window, my boy."

From the window he pointed. The little town lay all about them; the courthouse was on a slight knoll and commanded the environs quite as the house of law should do. Dr. Hatfield's outstretched arm indicated a particular house down by the river; so close, in

fact, that its back porch had the rush of water under it.

"The white house with the lawn; see it? The man pottering among the roses will be Oliver; he's a great hand for roses. Lives there with his worshipers; old mother and a son, Tom, who idolizes him more than any boy when I was a boy ever idolized a father. I'll get him for you."

Across the distance, which must have been a good half mile, Garry thought, Dr. Hatfield got his man, and in his own peculiar manner. He put both hands to his mouth and emitted a sound which so startled Garry that he jumped in his boots; it was like a speed cop's siren. Neither whistle nor cry, an uncanny combination of the two, and the only thing other than a siren that it was comparable to was a mountain lion's scream. The man among the rosebushes stood erect. Not only that but he waved his hat and hurried across the lawn and to the street.

"If you don't watch out," said the old doctor, turning on Garry and glaring at him, "that roughneck Ballinger'll marry her."

Garry allowed himself to indulge in an amused grin.

"Assuming that you're speaking of Miss Paradise, though it may be the sheriff's grandaunt you have in mind, I——"

"He's got bad blood in him, that timberjack," proclaimed Hatfield stoutly. "I knew his father before him, a burly, rowdy ruffian—but, glory be, what a noble fighter! I treated him one day for nine wounds, knife and bullet; and he was out and around in a week, looking for what was left of the boys that gang-jumped him. As a fighter I honored the old man; as a suitor for my little girl I've got no use for the young one. With whom," he added, cocking his old head aside, "Brand tells me you've already had one run-in?"

"Two by now," chuckled Garry. "A major and a minor, you might say. We're to be close neighbors, it seems. He's establishing a camp on the south fringe of the Mountain Meadow."

"Good!" and the old fellow rubbed his hands. "Hello, there, Enright! You'll want to be in on this. Step in."

He had glimpsed a young man through the open door and his summons brought Enright to them. A slender, well-dressed fellow in his earliest thirties, with a large, oratorical mouth and a good chin and lively, intelligent eyes.

"Paul Enright, district attorney," announced Dr. Hatfield ceremoniously, with his wide gesture. "Meet my young friend, Garry Moncton."

"Mr. Moncton?" said Enright and shook hands somewhat tentatively, measuring Garry from head to foot.

"Garry Moncton, I said," Hatfield reminded him. "He came for a word with Oliver about his cousin, Steve Moncton, whom he found shot in a cabin back up in the mountains."

"Oliver told me. He ought to be along pretty soon."

"Nothing private, I hope?" said a confidential and ingratiating sort of voice from the doorway, and Slyke came in. "Mind if I join you, gentlemen?"

No one, after the first stare, paid any particular attention to the newcomer; he examined Garry curiously, but neither Hatfield nor the district attorney introduced him.

"Oliver is on his way now," said the doctor. "I summoned him."

Enright laughed.

"I'll say you did! You get better and better, doctor, as the days go by." He turned again to Garry. "Is there anything you wanted to see me about? Or is your business just with the sheriff?"

"With both, if you can spare me half an hour. I can talk with Brand first, if you like, and then drop in at your office."

"Come along, then," said Enright. "We'll go to my office now; come ahead,

doctor. Slyke, tell the sheriff that we want to see him as soon as he comes in."

Hatfield chuckled very, very audibly and the three went out, down the corridor to its end, and turned into the district attorney's office. There Oliver Brand found them.

"First of all, Mr. Enright," Garry began, "I told the sheriff yesterday, and I want to repeat to you now, that I do not believe that my cousin shot himself."

"Anything definite to warrant that surmise, Mr. Moncton? It carries with it a very grave suspicion, you realize."

"Only my knowledge of Steve and what we know of facts. He was not the kind of man that commits suicide. Also, he had pretty well made his escape. He was close to a hundred miles from Westwood; in a mountain country where it would be hard to find and take him; and he must have counted himself as good as with friends."

"I see. You have some grounds for your decision." Enright nodded thoughtfully. "Just how tenable your theory is, is another matter. Frankly, I don't think that your argument should be overlooked, nor do I think it carries any great weight. Of course, we'll look into the matter all we can, eh, sheriff?"

"Yes," said Brand, no less thoughtful. "Anything's possible and always is in a case like this. Of course, some one may have shot him; a bunch of hotheads down in Westwood posted a reward, you remember. It could have been some man wanting that——"

"In which case, wouldn't he have remained to demand his money?" challenged Garry, who had already had this thought.

Brand shrugged.

"So it would seem. The only funny part of it is that you can never tell what a man's going to do until after he's done it. If it is murder instead of suicide—and I for one don't say yet that it is—we've got to hit on a likely man to do the killing."

"What about the man everybody calls the Sun Dodger?" demanded Garry sharply. "It was at his cabin, you know."

"The Sun Dodger," snorted Doctor Hatfield, "is a fabulous creature with horns, tail, and hoofs, and dried human blood under his finger nails! He vanishes with a puff if a ray of sunlight hits him; he emits sulphureous flames by night! He's pretty much everything in short, which doesn't happen to exist."

Both Enright and Brand laughed at him.

"I've heard so many wild yarns about the man," said Brand, "that of late I've begun trying to check up on him. Nobody seems to know anything of him at first hand; it's all what Pete says Jim told him that he had from Jake. It's my notion he's a harmless old coot, loony in a mild sort of way, nothing that a judge would sent him to an asylum for, you know. He's like a lot of old prospectors; gold on the brain; lived alone for forty years or so; shy of folks; always hiding out; poking around at night; all that sort of stuff. But of course you never can tell," he ended with a shrug.

"Talked with him yourself?" demanded Hatfield. And was surprised at Brand's prompt:

"I have. Twice. Run him to earth and ate bacon and beans with him! Alive to tell the tale, doc. Now, as for the old party having anything to do with what happened at his cabin, I'd say no. I've already told Moncton here. I was up in Trinity day before yesterday, as you know, Paul, handing those three dagos over to the jail there. And I ran across this same old Sun Dodger, him and his albino mule, prospecting back in the Trinity Hills. Of course," he added with a sly look at Hatfield, "if Doc's right about the old bird, he may have changed his mule into an airplane and made the trip back ahead of me."

"I had no expectation," said Garry,

"of doing more to-day than registering my suspicion in the proper quarters. Beyond that, all I can do for my cousin is arrange for his decent burial."

"There'll be no obstacles set in your way," the district attorney assured him.

"And now, with your permission, I'll refer to another matter which properly does not come within your field of interest at all; yet I'm hoping one of you may help me. Do any of you happen to know Phil Kent?"

Though Hatfield shook his head after the fashion of a man trying to place a name and failing, and Brand sat stolid and silent, Enright nodded.

"I know him, though very slightly. He bought the Mountain Meadow ranch; he came to me about some small question of title. Everything was clear; he went away, and I haven't seen much of him since. That was some time ago, of course; I did glimpse him on the street here two or three weeks ago. And there, Mr. Moncton, you have the sum total of my knowledge of Philip Kent. If I wanted to find him, I'd look for him at the ranch."

"I'll draw it short," said Garry, and told of his failure to find Kent and of the appearance of desertion at the ranch.

"No doubt making a short trip somewhere," suggested Brand carelessly, "and locking up in the good old-fashioned way."

"He was expecting me; that's one thing. I had a letter from him urging me to hurry; that's another." Garry took the letter from his pocket and spread it out on the table. Brand, Enright, and Doctor Hatfield all leaned forward to read it, all sat back and looked at the speaker interestedly as Garry concluded dryly: "And on looking things over at the ranch I found warning signs stuck up everywhere. Signs that fairly yelled in my ear, 'Look out! Trouble!' And what do you make of that?"

Enright, brows up, drummed on his table. Brand, brows down, repeated sharply:

"Warning signs? Signs saying 'Look Out'?—What do you mean?"

"I'll explain," said Garry, and did so.

"A broken stick, as you describe it," objected the lawyer, "might be a very simple coincidence. Even two sticks. But three or four or five——"

"Seven in all, so far."

"And never a letter? Not so much as a scrap of paper in the house?"

"I'm on my way now to the post office here. It's just possible he may have put a letter in there for me. I think, however, he would have used my other address. And he said nothing about going away in the note you've just read."

He stood up, looking from one to another of the three faces which were pretty much alike in blankness.

"That broken-stick signal, when we were boys playing Indian, meant that the Big Chief, our youthful conception of a murderous, scalp-lifting savage, was on the rampage. Phil wrote me to bring Steve. Steve is dead, killed at the Sun Dodger's cabin. Phil simply fades out. And now you know pretty much all there is to know."

Enright transferred his frowning and puzzled eyes to Brand.

"Hang it all, Oliver," he muttered, "it doesn't listen nice and sweet, does it? And that Sun Dodger of yours has managed to stir up a reputation of sorts for himself. Fairly new in our county, too."

Brand rose, stretched his arms, and shook himself.

"I've been keeping an eye on him, Paul; I'll keep on doing so." His eyes went to Garry in the doorway: "While the Sun Dodger seems to me to have an air-tight alibi this time, there's another man who was somewhere near the cabin night before last."

"I think I know whom you mean," said Garry.

"Name him."

"I'd rather you did," for he recalled his promise to Eve.

"Bob Ballinger?" Garry nodded. Brand continued: "He said to one of the boys that he was going to stay in the cabin overnight, to get an early start to the camp he's establishing up your way. Later, he said he had changed his mind and made him a shake-down for the few hours at another shanty, one a couple of miles off to the east. Well, we'll look into all these things, won't we, Paul?"

"You're shouting," said the district attorney, with a certain grimness about the large mouth which belied his youth. "Keep in touch, Mr. Moncton. Glad to know you," he decided to admit at the end, and Garry left them.

He inquired at the post office; there was nothing. He spent the greater part of the day in town, busied with the sad duty of performing the last services for poor old Steve. In the late afternoon, meaning to be back at the ranch before morning, he went to the livery stable for his horse. As he rode down the street he caught a glimpse of Dr. Hatfield waving his dingy old Panama at him, and spurred over for what he supposed to be a friendly "so long."

"Look out for that dog, Ballinger," warned the old fellow. "He's the man you've got to keep an eye on, Garry, my boy."

"Think so? What do you think Ballinger is up to?"

"Why, he'll marry her right under our two noses if we don't look out!" snorted Hatfield. And so sent Garry smiling queerly out of town.

CHAPTER IX.

SET ON BY THREE.

I'VE most generally noticed, Mr. Moncton," said Joe Miner lugubriously, "how two calls three. Which, in other words, means that bad luck goes in triplets."

"Croak on, old raven," grunted Garry, squinting down the barrel of his rifle, which had just undergone a thorough cleaning. "What's on your mind now?"

"It's my aim,' sighed Joe, "to prepare you for trouble. Looky-here, Garry. There was three of you pals. One, your cousin, gets wiped out mysterious. No. 2, that's Phil Kent, goes up in smoke, so to say, more mysterious. There's you left. I'd say it's a right step to clean and oil your guns. Bad luck's like lightning, seeing how quick and hard it hits; it's different, seeing how it hits in threes."

"You and optimism never slept in the same bed!"

"Optimism!" jeered Joe. "Optimism! Nary, nary, never no more. Once in my life I yielded to optimism, taking it, as most does I notice, along with a jug. And look what it let me in for! Says I, 'It's all coming out right this trip. Joe Miner'll be sitting up nice and fine, wedded to fifty thousand bucks of the realm.' Yielding that a way to optimism, what does a man do? He shuts his eyes tight and sails along square into a mess of trouble. Not any more, Mr. Moncton. I'm off that stuff for life. Which"—he added, with another and deeper sigh—"won't be long now, I reckon. With Ballinger hanging around like a big black cloud and scarce ever more'n gunshot away."

Garry set his rifle away and took up his pipe; this, too, because his acts grew automatic as his thoughts traveled far, he began to clean.

"What's wrong between Ballinger and Brand?" he asked.

"You've noticed something?"

"Ballinger, the other day, when I mentioned the sheriff's name, bristled and intimated that Brand had better keep his nose out of his affairs, quite as though the sheriff had been interfering with him. In town, when we spoke of the Sun Dodger's cabin and what had happened there, Brand spoke up, men-

tioning Ballinger and at least hinting that he ought to be checked up on. Any war between the two, Joe?"

"Well, there is a speck of bad blood, folks says. It begins with politics, when Ballinger does all he can to beat Brand; or it begins with something else and shows up in the political scrap. More'n that, Mr. Moncton, quién sabe?"

"How long has this been going on?"

"Ruction between them two? Oh, quite a spell. Three-four-five years, I'd say offhand. What's the odds to you?"

Garry made him no answer but went about his business. Joe Miner was used to such treatment; this employer to whom he had affixed himself spoke when he chose and kept a shut mouth when he pleased. Garry's present errand took him to the corral for his horse, then off into the thick woods extending to the north of the ranch house. With him went his rifle; yet there was no departure from local custom in that fact. Most mountain men rode with a rifle on the saddle or across the arm, if for no grimmer business than readiness for the chance "varmints" which preyed on live stock.

Time had passed and, upon those matters on which Garry Moncton strove to come at enlightenment, kept silence. He began to think that one more eternal secret had been added in the manner of the taking off of Steve. And as the days ran by and May merged into June with never a word from Phil Kent, he began to fear that he and his old friend had clasped hands for the last time. Yet he rode, as to-day, trying to hope; following trail after trail, looking for some sign, if only a broken stick. And many were the rides which, in wide circles, brought him home in the dusk by the lonely cabin known as the Sun Dodger's.

For, though vaguely, he connected Steve's death with Phil Kent's vanishing. Phil had scented danger—and gone. Steve, without scenting it, had gone, too. What more likely than that the thing which menaced one menaced equally the other? They had gone one way during the latter years while Garry had gone another; they had been trail mates, bunk mates, friends with common fortunes and misfortunes. They had known their wild days together, down in the South. And Phil in his last brief letter had urged that Steve come.

"What if it is the Sun Dodger? He is new to this country; he and Steve and Phil could have known one another somewhere. He could have wiped the two of them out—for a reason known only to the three. Yet, how is a man to know?"

For neighbor he had Ballinger; Ballinger planning on a mill on Wild River, planning on a road, even planning, so they said, on a branch line brought in from the Northwestern Mountain Railroad. It began to appear that Ballinger was a man bent on big things. He had some capital behind him; he gave the impression of being able to secure more. A big man in the making, this Bob Ballinger, yet, so far, in the making only. A man with a purpose like iron set in concrete. So long as that purpose remained single, Ballinger was sure to drive along under full steam to success. But life has its way of insisting upon complications in most human activities and ambitions, and life had caught Ballinger in its toils. There was love, which burned with a bright and consuming flame in his soul. There was fresh young hate, which, as so often happens, had caught fire from the spark of love itself. A vain, self-centered and self-sufficient man he had been, and yet not even those qualities were sufficient to save him from jealousy. When Eve Paradise so much as looked at another man, Ballinger grew tense; if she smiled into other eyes than his, he went white.

And Eve, being Eve, smiled where she listed. Whether right or wrong she held herself fancy free and found life very sweet.

There were three particular points to one of which Garry Moncton's rides along dim woods trails brought him most often. The Sun Dodger's cabin: He lived in hopes of the return of a man in whom his lively interest grew keener with the passing days. The door remained unfastened; Garry entered a dozen times, to stand frowning about him at walls, floor, every scant bit of rude furnishing, hoping for some faint voice that might give him some hint. There was that still mirror of a glacial pond which he had named Lake Eve; he rode often through the fine timber to its placid shore, climbed for a seat upon a tall shaft of granite reflecting itself in the clear water, and fell into protracted abstraction. Here, he felt certain, Phil Kent had come often; here Phil, like himself, would have sat, breathing in the deep peace of the woods. For he knew Phil, and that the place must have called to him.

And, third, there was the "Ghost Town." On the first day of chancing upon it, all but smothered in the rich growth down in a shadowy hollow, he had returned to Joe Miner, saying:

"Think of a man buying a whole city, Joe, and never knowing of it all this while! Here I am the mayor, the whole board of works and high municipal dog-catcher, and you've been treating me like a mere common human being!"

"Sure," said Joe. "I could have told you all about that town, Garry. Michigan City it was, or leastways was called, and that was by them that built it along about seventy-five years ago when California sprouted gold towns like sprouts out of a pile of potatoes forgot in the barn. Them red-shirts, Mr. Moncton, was the real optimists you been talking about! Sloshed some dirt in a pan, got a show of color, let out a war whoop, killed a bottle of licker, and established a 'city' which was to be the capital of the State with railroads, theaters, and plush saloons. And look at it now!"

Garry did look at it, and with interest. What dreams those old-timers had dreamed! What ash heaps their dreams, so many of them, tumbled into, while so many others rose into lofty permanence. Michigan City, who ever heard of it? Garry Moncton, sole owner; and he did not even know that he owned it until, led by chance along a bare sketch of a trail, he rode down into the cup which it centered.

A place of ruins, monument to a past era of high hopes and headlong restlessness. Built in positive assurance; abandoned in a day when a vein or pocket pinched out and some new glittering rumor drew its denizens to the latest strike. There had been sturdy log houses, making their substantial bid to permanence. Some were mounds now; fire had got them; charred timbers were sunk in leafy mold; fresh young trees drove their roots among the skeletons of an older generation. There were entire walls still standing; the forest encroached; a tree fifty years old grew out of a wreck of a stone chimney. And, here and there in this picturesque ruin of hopes, stood a building good for a century yet, unless earthquake or human hand shook it down. Constructed of stone and mortar were these; even some fragments of roof remained; iron door and shutter, brought at unknown labor and expense, stood red with rust, yet as stubbornly at their posts as so many boys of burning deck fame.

Garry chanced first upon this place one late afternoon. Something of its strange atmosphere rose up like an emanation and froze him into motionless and silence. Through the soft-breathing *susurro* of the pine tops he heard the quiet singing of a creek; no other sound. A ghost town. Well, the name was apt! Little ghosts started up all about him; something was left behind here by departed lives. Eager voices had called; eager footsteps had hastened up and down; their echoes seemed to him to

live on in the subdued whisperings of pine to murmuring water. "Where are the snows of yesterday?" The ghost of "our sad, bad, mad, glad brother" might have come overseas to be at home here, for how glad, and mad, and bad, the place had been, how sad now!

And here one morning Garry came all unexpectedly on Bob Ballinger. Garry sat his horse, looking interestedly about him; Ballinger on foot came suddenly about a corner of ruins. This time he had his rifle in his hand, and the hand tightened involuntarily.

"Well?" Ballinger demanded sharply.

"Hello, Ballinger," returned Garry with studied quietude. "Anything wanted?"

"What do you mean by that?" Ballinger came flashing back at him, obviously truculent.

"It's my land, I believe. I didn't suppose that you and I would be going out of our ways to encroach."

"Your land?" Ballinger looked blank, then laughed. "The days of buying a few acres and then spreading them out all over creation are gone by. If you mean this is a part of the Mountain Meadow ranch, you're off! Off a good half mile, maybe more." He fell silent, pondered a moment, then said curtly: "I'm looking over the timber here with an eye to start in cutting pretty soon."

"Better go slow, hadn't you, Ballinger? I've been trying to check up on my corners. You'd better do a little line-checking yourself."

Ballinger's fingers all the while were working at the stock of his rifle. Suddenly he burst out angrily:

"I've got a notion to stop your clock right now! What do you say to that?"

"That we both know better," he got for crisp rejoinder. "Or you'd not be talking about it." Yet Moncton's eyes were as watchful as Ballinger's.

"I'm not so sure." A cold fury gripped the man; he was not sure. He stood there glaring, in the balance. In a strange, detached sort of way he began speaking again: "Sooner or later it's going to be you or me. Unless—look here, Moncton," and his tone altered and grew rapid and businesslike, "I'll make you a proposition. I'm going to cut timber on three sides of you; south, east and north. While I'm at it, I could cut over the Mountain Meadow, too. I'll buy you out!"

"No," said Garry. "I'm not selling."

"I'll give you ten thousand above what you paid. That's a fair profit. On condition you take it and go—fade out of the picture."

"No. I'm not selling."

Ballinger"s face turned red; he began to fight with himself to throttle down whatever emotion, and it was not hard to read, goaded him. Garry was entirely unprepared for the look which dawned slowly, then grew unmistakable, in the eyes bent upon him. Ballinger, sorely distressed, was pleading with him.

"Listen to me, Moncton, and for the love of Heaven, think straight! Cats and dogs hate each other; I hate you like that. Some day, if you stay, I'll kill you if you don't kill me, and I don't think you will. You're new here; it means nothing for you to pull out. Your roots haven't had time to sink deep; mine have. Rather than have trouble with you, I'll pay you to go. Take all you put into your ranch; take ten thousand on top of it—and get out of here!"

Only at the end did he grow violent. He spat out the words, then again strove for self-mastery.

"I see no necessity either of my going or our having trouble," Garry told him coolly, seeing the need to keep himself in hand, every sense and muscle on the alert in case Ballinger's pent-up rage exploded into murderous action. "Any matter of boundary dispute can be settled without going to war. And each man can keep on his own side of the line."

"It's not that," said Ballinger stonily.

"You know it's not that." He took a deep breath, squared his shoulders, and ran on swiftly as though to get it over and done with, now that he had decided: "It's Eve Paradise. You know that. She's nothing to you. You haven't been here long enough; you don't know her like I do. It's Eve Paradise. If you stay I'll have to kill you. Now wait a minute! I told you to listen and to think straight. She's mine; my girl; my woman. She's the only one I ever looked twice at. She's a part of me; she's in here." He struck his chest with a clenched hand. "And now you come along. You're different; you're smoother than I am. As a man you're no better, and she knows that. Maybe you're as good; in some things." He shrugged heavily. "Not in loving her as I do. She's different since you came. I'm not giving her up; I'm not quitting because of you. But—I'm paying my way! I'm paying you to go—or killing you if you get in my way."

"What would you say if I offered you ten thousand dollars to go away?"

"But you don't love her; not yet. Not like I do. She belongs to me; not to you. I've watched her grow; it's been like watching a flower. A bud opening. I'm no driveling poet, and I'm not much at words, but when I think of her I feel like I could be. A bud opening, I tell you. Showing me its golden heart. Mine; mine, by Heaven!"

By now he appeared to have forgotten his rifle and the rifle in Garry's hands. An agonized moisture stood out on his brow; he wiped it away with the back of his hand. Then all of a sudden the fires flashed up in his eyes again.

"No, I'm not ashamed of opening up like that!" he cried out, and Garry saw that he was ashamed. "I'd do anything and be ashamed of nothing to come by her. Now, what's the answer? Going?"

"Sorry, Ballinger," said Garry, and he was sorry. "It can't be done. This is home to me now. Here I stay."

Without another word, with only a look of such savagery that it was like the glittering of knives, Bob Ballinger turned on his heel and departed. He was to be heard crashing through the bushes, going straight through and over petty obstacles like a lumbering bear; next the rapid thud of his horse's hoofs as he rode on his way.

Garry turned thoughtfully homeward. He had said that he was sorry; he was sorry for Bob Ballinger. There was a man who was suffering, cut to the quick; a man who loved with a deep and earnest devotion which was at once in keeping with his forceful character and, in its vast tenderness, oddly at variance with his burly, savage bearing. So sure of himself in all other matters, so quick to fear in this one which meant most of all to him. So eager and so fearful that he sought to bribe one who might become his rival, to plead with him to go away!

"Ten thousand dollars? It's a round sum——"

He pondered that unexpected offer. Was it made just to have what Ballinger judged a clear pathway to Eve Paradise's love? Or was there another, a more cogent reason? Somebody, Garry held stubbornly, had killed Steve. Some human agency, other than Phil's own election, lay behind Phil's disappearance, he held with equal assurance. Ballinger behind the two sinister facts? And did Ballinger fear disclosure as a result of Garry's continued concern? The sheriff came and went; he had other matters on his hands, occupying his mind. Garry was bent with all the grim determination within him upon coming to the truth.

During these passing weeks Garry had formed a Saturday afternoon habit. The crowd gathered at Paradise House each Saturday evening; Garry rode down the mountain trails in the afternoons. To spend an hour in the vivacious company of Eve Paradise after a week of such thoughts as stood all day

at his elbow was like a glass of sparkling spring water to one who had fought through a desert waste. Sometimes he talked with the oddly English-looking Tootles who had been the girl's only tutor and who was a thoroughly interesting if retiring little man; sometimes Jim Paradise, given to taciturnity, though always courteous, spent some moments with him discussing the present, past, and problematical future of his beloved mountains. Most frequently Eve, dainty and fresh in her little house-dress, chatted with him on Echo Porch. And each time, before the evening crowds came, Garry left.

"I don't have to cut notches in sticks to tell the day of the week," observed Joe Miner. "Mr. Moncton has had his lunch early to-day; he's now mowing off a three-days' growth of red oats. Next, he'll wipe off the sights of his rifle, put a clean hanky in his tail pocket, and go saddle up. Saturday."

Garry laughed at him good-humoredly, parted his hair with nicety in as blurry a bit of mirror as ever distorted man's visage, and observed:

"Run the ranch until I get back, Joseph. If your friend Ballinger drops in while I'm away, be sweet to him."

"Will I?" snapped Joe. "Oh, my!"

"Do you suppose he knows you're here, Joe?"

"How should he?" and Joe's eyes rounded. "Nobody knows it but just you and Miss Eve. Do I suspect either you or her having the instincts and sensibilities of a snake? 'Course he don't know! Besides which," he added with a grin, "I always do two things, precautionary as you might say: I keep my gun handy—and the back door propped wide open! Did you ever see me travel anywhere when I'm moving in a fair-sized hurry?"

Garry saddled Dandy and rode out across his meadow, across the merry-making creek, into the timber. Yes, Joe was right; when he shaved and then took up his rifle, it meant Saturday afternoon! This going a-calling, carrying heavy artillery, had from the start impressed him as downright ridiculous; when he drew near Eve's house the gun in his hand irked him and he was tempted to throw it over a cliff and be done with it. That others rode "heeled" everywhere they went did not matter. And to-day, though he carried his rifle when he left the ranch, he was determined to appear without it at the house high above Echo Canyon.

Its company, however, was like that of a friend when he turned aside, as was customary with him, to see if the Sun Dodger's cabin still remained tenantless. To him, always, be it imagination or a keen sense which was once strong in primitive man and has not altogether atrophied, the place reeked with evil. He began to form his own character-picture of the Sun Dodger. Prejudiced? No doubt. Yet, prejudices are very strong and not always in error.

As usual, nothing new here. Not so much as fresh char in the fireplace; nothing disturbed. He came out into the clean sunshine and closed the door, leaving it as he had found it.

When soon afterward he came to that section of trail which zigzagged down Paradise Mountain toward the canyon and gave the first glimpse of the big log house on the cliff, he began questing about him for a likely place to hide his rifle. A short distance farther on the trail branched, the offshoot straggling away toward that group of small ranches "infested," as Joe Miner put it, by the Adams-Jenkins-Jenkins' Widow outfit. Here was a clump of manzanitas and here to-day he set aside his weapon snuggled up to the old dead pine.

Why to-day instead of last Saturday? Why not next Saturday instead of to-day? Chance is the usual explanation; bad luck or good luck, as the point of view dictates. Unfortunate to-day?

Or fortunate? One only judges that it might have been a different sort of day had he ridden armed as usual.

For as he rode down into the floor of the canyon, coming abruptly about a dense grove of young poplars, it flashed over him that a surprise party had been staged for his benefit. And that this party smacked overmuch of an ambush. Three men spurred their horses out from the grove in front of him; each man of them carried a gun over his arm and wore a big flapping handkerchief over his face. Garry pulled Danny down to a sharp halt; the three riders, ominously silent, closed in about him.

"What's the idea, boys?" Garry demanded.

"Slide down off your horse," he was told sharply. "Do as you're told and snap into it!"

Garry reddened angrily. Once already this sort of thing had happened to him at the hands of strangers here in the mountain; and once was something more than enough. Twice was insufferable. He cast a glance upward; the Paradise House was hidden by the broken lines of mountain. The spot had been chosen nicely.

"You're a nice prize bunch of ring-tailed monkeys," he jeered angrily at them. "Spot a man that isn't even armed, then gang-jump him!"

"Shut your mouth, you double-crossing, pardner-killing skunk," he got for surly rejoinder. "Pile off your horse or get spilled; which is it?"

Garry, though a tremor of rage shook him, strove for quick and accurate judgment. He was not sure of any man of these but leaped to the conclusion that they were Ballinger's men. He sought among them for Ballinger's big, surly form and felt a prick of disappointment; Ballinger was not among them.

"Taking Bob Ballinger's pay for this, boys?" he asked as coolly as he could manage.

They pressed closer; he saw that, were he so minded, any thought of escape was out of the question.

"I asked you once, what's the idea?" he demanded.

A man caught Dandy's reins; Garry sat motionless, watchful, alert for whatever chance might come his way. To have struck the hand away would have invited a rifle barrel over his skull, and he read as much in the eyes which were to be glimpsed between handkerchief edge and hat brim. One by one the three men swung down from their saddles, and two pairs of hands were laid on his ankles.

"You want me down? Then what?"

"We're not going to hurt you, little boy," one of his captors jeered at him. "We wouldn't be rough with you for the world; not if you're a real good boy. You'll be back in your saddle almost as quick as you come down, riding backwards and tied on, that's all. And on your way out of a country where dogs of your breed ain't asked. Coming down?"

"So that's it?" Garry's strained voice answered him. "Just sending me for a ride, huh? And don't plan to hurt me? And don't want me to come back?" He shrugged. "Down I come."

He freed his right foot from the stirrup, leaned forward in the saddle as a man must to dismount, drew the free right leg up over the cantle—and all of a sudden and utterly without warning catapulted himself on the man who stood holding Dandy's reins. The fellow toppled backward, Garry on top of him; they fell together, and when one flashed to his feet it was Garry Moncton and he held in both hands the fallen man's rifle. But in the rage which gripped him, in the desperation of the moment, he forgot that it was a rifle and it became the club in the savage grip of an antediluvian man. He swung it by the barrel in a wide, vicious circle, scarcely taking time to see where his blow fell. Time? There was no such

thing. Life leaped; a man to live must leap with it. One man down, he trod on with spurred bootheels; another man, struck a fearful blow across the shoulders was flung out of the trail; the third had his rifle at his shoulder to shoot when Garry flung his own rifle with all his might. The shot was fired; the echoes went mad with it; the bullet went wild, and the weapon clattered among the stones from the grasp of a hand dangling from a broken wrist.

And then Garry Moncton, whom they had never known until now, a man who seldom lost his temper but who when he did became a man beside himself, stormed at them, unleashing his fury in words, inviting them to come and get it, come and get it, come and get it! What he wanted them to come and get was obvious, and they wanted none of it. For again he had a rifle in his hands and he swung from one to another of them, red fury in his eyes. There was not a man among them who was what is technically known as a coward; and there was not a man of them who did not stare and stand bemused.

So in the end he broke from abuse into mocking laughter. And it was while he stood there—if you like, like some ancient Saxon chief who had fallen among lesser men and who had risen above them by that sheer man-prowess which has ever made chieftains—that Eve Paradise rode into their midst. She was returning from a "professional" call upon Jenkins' Widow's youngest; she had glimpsed something of what had happened through the outer fringe of poplars; the sight which was hers now when, Garry's laughter stilled, she looked upon the four men was amply explanatory.

Her cheeks were pale, yet they wore two high spots of color, and her gray eyes were at once strangely dark with scorn and bright with anger.

"Cowards! Cowards!" she cried breathlessly, her glance racing from one to another of the masked faces. And then, impulsively: "Oh, Garry! You're not hurt?"

"Just a friendly little game we're playing," said Garry with a grin, though his pulses leaped at the tone of her voice and the swiftly altered look in her eyes. "Nobody hurt—much," he added with grim satisfaction as he looked them over. That one man had a broken wrist was obvious; that another had a long crimson cut alongside his face where his jaw had struck a ragged edge of stone was likewise not to be missed. "In a moment, if you'll let me, I'll be riding on home with you. Our game ends first with the unmasking. I'm just a wee bit curious, you know, to see who my friends are!"

"Don't you know?" she cried hotly. "Hiding behind masks, like cowards! Oh, Sandy Burns, I'm surprised at you. And ashamed! And you, 'Curly!' And you, Dan Howard! Three men to one—like city ruffians, like valley roughs, never like real mountain men! For shame!"

The three braced themselves, and any man would have known, despite hidden features, that every one of them wished himself elsewhere.

"He tricked us," muttered one of them. "It wasn't fair fighting."

"Fair!" she mocked him.

"All friends of Ballinger, aren't they?" said Garry. "All on his pay roll?"

Her eyes widened as with fresh understanding. A warmer color spread over her cheeks.

"Oh!" It was a little muffled gasp; it was eloquent of a new hurt dealt her. An instant she seemed to droop under the weight of heavy disappointment. Then she stiffened and her chin came up and she said coldly: "I think Mr. Moncton will let you three boys go now. I don't think that any of you will ever come again to Paradise House. Hirelings? Paid thugs? And when you

go, you can tell Bob Ballinger for me that at least I would have thought better of him if he were man enough to do his own villainy. Coming, Mr. Moncton?"

Garry gathered up the two other rifles and went to his horse.

"The funny part of it," he told Eve humorously as he and she rode side by side in the canyon, "is that I was fed up on coming to see you like a good old Pilgrim Father with a blunderbus over my arm—and here I come with three of 'em! And the only sad item in an otherwise happy day resides in the fact that you call me 'Mr. Moncton' after having done the thing properly just now!"

She looked at him curiously. Her own agitation was too great to be subdued, even quite concealed so soon. She strove, however, to match his own coolness.

"Did I call you 'Garry'?"

"And it was like the first day of spring all of a sudden, birds singing, flowers blooming——"

She laughed, though a trifle uncertainly.

"Come; let's gallop!"

"'Garry'?"

"Let's gallop—Pilgrim Father!" she flashed at him, and they sped along the canyon at a pace in accord with eager pulses.

To be continued in next week's issue of WESTERN STORY MAGAZINE.

NOT ENOUGH EGGS

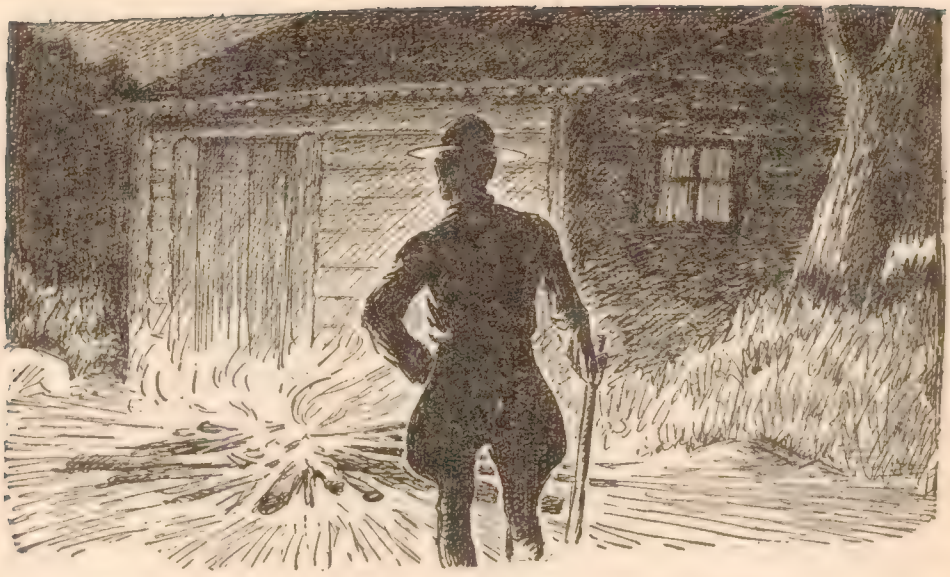
FORTY-FIVE THOUSAND SIX HUNDRED eggs a minute constitute the output of the hens of the country. Even this valiant record, however, is not, according to figures recently released by the department of agriculture, quite adequate to the needs of the American people. The hen is slipping just a little. There were, for instance, on April 1, only some five hundred and fifty thousand cases of eggs in storage, as compared with a record of over a million cases on hand at the same date the year previously.

Coincident with this mild disaster, the department of agriculture has taken the extremely tactless step of issuing a new booklet entitled "Eggs at Any Meal." So one must assume that there will be a real egg famine when those who have heretofore been without longing for eggs see the booklet.

ALASKA ACQUIRES BUFFALO

IT has now been demonstrated that buffalo, as well as other things native to this country, can flourish in Alaska. The experiment was made by the United States department of agriculture, whose first reports on the enterprise are now available. A total of twenty-three animals was shipped from the national bison range in Montana, and nineteen of these were released near McCarty, Alaska. The remaining four were held at the reindeer experiment station of the biological survey.

As far as can be observed, the buffalo seem to fit themselves into their new surroundings. In fact, they are extraordinarily well adjusted to an Alaskan environment, for they can find all the food they need growing wild. Sufficient hay was kept on hand to feed them, if such a step should become necessary. But the animals demonstrated their ability to forage for food through even the worst of the winter months.



Timber Hungry

By Kenneth Gilbert

Author of "The Fire Spotter," etc.

CHAPTER I.

WITH AVID EYES.

MORE than forty years ago, old Jabez Cranston had felled his first Douglas fir in the Pacific Northwest. He had since prospered to the extent of being able to hire hundreds of men to cut trees for him, as well as other hundreds to convert them into lumber. He raised his eyes from a typewritten sheet and scowled at Nason, his superintendent. When Cranston spoke, it was necessary for him to lift his voice above the insistent whine of the great band-saws in his near-by mill as, log by log, the fir giants were fed into the consuming maw of the machines.

"According to this report," the old man declared, "we'll cut our last stick of timber within two months. I thought that you estimated there were enough logs on our land to keep us going another year?"

Nason smiled. He was rather thin-faced, with shifty eyes, but a capable man, and it was said of him that no one but he—except, perhaps, Cranston's daughter, Jane—could really handle the old timber baron. Strong men had tried it and failed; but the suave Nason, though always deferential in the presence of old Jabez, nevertheless controlled his boss gently but firmly, as one might a temperamental, high-strung horse.

"So I did," agreed Nason. "But I had based my figures on the timber cruise you made before I came here. Now, however, the government," and he stressed the word, "informs me that our survey lines are wrong; that what we considered to be our holdings are really part of the Skokomish National Forest.

Therefore, Mr. Cranston, you have much less timber than you had counted upon."

"The government told you that?" demanded old Jabez, his voice rising still more. "You mean—that forest ranger up there on Ranger's Rock—that fire spotter?"

Nason smiled. "Exactly," he said. "Jim Strafford, who in this case represents the government."

Cranston swore, but Nason went on as though he had not heard.

"I had a talk with Strafford to-day," said Nason. "He is as obstinate and bull-headed as ever. I tried to show him that continuing the operation of our logging camps and mills meant everything to the town of Cranstonville. If he would be reasonable and close his eyes, we would go ahead logging along our old lines. By the time the forestry officials found it out, if they ever did, we'd have the stuff made into lumber and the lumber sold. We could afford to stand a lawsuit then; we'd make money on the deal.

"But Strafford refused to stand for it. You know, he's got a sort of foolish affection for the big trees. You'd think they belonged to him. Also, he has an exaggerated sense of what he terms duty."

"Did you offer to make it worth his while?"

"Offered him five thousand," was Nason's reply, "and he ordered me out of his place. Threatened to make a report of it."

Old Jabez' color deepened. "He's a fool!" the old man cried. "A blithering fool!"

Nason smiled appreciatively. "At least, he's an honest one," he remarked. "They know, down at forestry headquarters, that Strafford can't be bribed; that's why they keep him up there on Ranger's Rock. That's why, too, we've been unable to 'get' him through Washington. Somebody in power, some where along the line, likes the style of our friend on Ranger's Rock and means to keep him there."

"A fool," insisted old Jabez. "He sits up there in his cubby-hole, as though he was a ruler, and tells me what I can do and what I can't. And I could make him wealthy, if he'd play the game the whole way."

Nason lifted his brows. "Of course," he explained, "if you'd care to follow Strafford's suggestions, we could keep operating indefinitely, although on a smaller scale. He pointed out again that the government will grant us a permit to log in the national forest providing we do not sweep the country clean but take a tree here and there."

Old Jabez snorted, and thumped his fist on the table. "Never!" he cried, "Not in ten thousand years! D'ye suppose I'd let some upstart forest ranger stand over me and tell me which tree to cut and which to leave alone? Never!"

Nason's mouth twisted in a placating grin. "So I assumed," he agreed. "And that is why I've been doing a little thinking, to see if we can't outwit our friend up on Ranger's Rock. In fact, I have the details of one plan. If that fails, there's still another."

Old Jabez looked at him gratefully. "Good boy, Nason!" he approved. "I knew I could depend on you."

Nason nodded. "Before I begin," he replied, "there's one other thing I'd like to call to your attention. It's about Jane."

Cranston frowned. "Lead on," he urged. "What's happened? Did she refuse you?"

"Not yet," Nason replied, "because I haven't asked her to marry me. It is my understanding, however, that such a match would have your approval. But —frankly, sir, she apparently doesn't understand that Strafford is our enemy. I met her riding down the trail which passes Ranger's Rock, when I went up

there to-day. It didn't seem wise for me to say anything at the time——"

Old Jabez closed his lips firmly. "It wouldn't have been," he declared grimly. "Jane is a Cranston, and the Cranstons have always done their own thinking. But, by the powers, if I find that this upstart ranger who is out to block me has been hanging around my girl——"

He broke off, as though fearful that he might say too much. "Go on with your plan," he told Nason shortly.

The superintendent smiled, and began to speak.

CHAPTER II.

THE FIRE SPOTTER.

IF Jim Strafford, fire lookout at Ranger's Rock, in the Skokomish National Forest, had been less practical and more poetical, he might have fancied himself seated with the gods. For the tiny ranger station atop the needlelike peak was a good eight thousand feet above sea level, and the lookout's view commanded many square miles of forested hills, rugged peaks and cascading streams. Despite the fact that he was in his twenties, he had held this post for five years, and Ranger's Rock was declared by men who knew to be the "hottest" job of its kind in the Pacific Northwest.

He had endured the monotony, the tedious task of sitting up there alone, day after day throughout the summer months; he knew the ordeal of electrical storms, more violent than in the lowlands, when he seemed to be in the very center of a terrifying drum-fire of heaven's artillery, with lightning bathing the place in a fearful glow, and the jarring reverberations of thunder threatening to shake the cabin from its insecure perch among the clouds. Seated before the large map which was fixed true to compass points, he had marked through his telescope the start of forest fires where careless fishermen or hunters had camped, and he had summoned aid from fire-fighting headquarters, directing the men to the exact spot by determining it on his map. The strain of watching constantly for fires—he had once "spotted" twenty-seven in a single day, following an unusually severe electrical storm—became at times almost unendurable. But it is such tests as this to which the forest service subjects its men, that their worth may be determined. Even so, Strafford was ready to admit at times that he would have either quit, or sought a transfer, if it were not for one reason. That reason was Jane Cranston.

Yet there was another. He was proud of his forest, and took satisfaction in guarding it, looking after its welfare. Woe unto the careless individual whom Strafford caught tossing away a burning match! Among the Indians, who were permitted to hunt at will in the forest, he had been given the name of "The Keeper of the Giants," because of the watchful care which he exercised over these magnificent fir trees. Strafford took his job seriously, realizing that if these trees were to be saved for future generations, as the government intended, he must be vigilant, not alone against the hazards of fire but against the covetous strain in such men as old Jabez Cranston and his superintendent, Nason, for instance. But it was really Jane who held him to his job, Strafford told himself, vain though his hopes might be.

From his lofty eyrie, the fire spotter could look down upon the little town of Cranstonville, built almost on the border of the national forest, and on a breathlessly still day the song of the bandsaws was wafted up to the man on Ranger's Rock. Jim kept watch on Cranstonville and the woods crew of old Jabez. Twice now he had warned them against encroaching on the government-owned timber, and only this morning he had had the satisfaction of offering to throw Nason off Ranger's

Rock because the superintendent had hinted at a five-thousand-dollar bribe. Such a thing suggested not only the betrayal of the ranger's trust, but the forest which he loved.

Now, in midafternoon, he found himself again staring through his telescope down at Cranstonville. Only he was not watching old Jabez, but the trim figure of a girl seated on a sleek horse which was riding at an easy gallop along the trail which passed the foot of Ranger's Rock.

Jim's eyes shone, as he realized that she would pass very near him. Only that morning he had watched Jane Cranston ride past the Rock, headed for town. Now she was out again for an afternoon canter. He wanted to stop her and talk to her, but he felt shy.

He watched her now, as she neared the Rock, and saw that she was slowing the horse. She stopped at the foot of the steep trail, and waved her handkerchief. Wondering, Jim came out on the narrow porch, and waved back at her. She was motioning him to come down.

He took one last look at the forest. All quiet there; not a sign of smoke. Then he slid into the boatswain's chair, which was operated by a steel cable, and lowered himself to a ledge sixty feet below the ranger station. From there he moved swiftly down the mountainside. It was perhaps a quarter of a mile from the foot of the ledge to where she waited.

There was a serious expression on the girl's face, as she stood there beside her horse, yet she smiled at sight of Jim. He smiled back shyly, and put his hand to his head as though he would remove his hat, but recalled that he had forgotten to put it on. They both laughed, and Jim felt easier.

But the girl sobered instantly, and looked behind her, as though she half expected to see that somebody had followed her.

"Can't stop but a moment," she told Strafford. "I'm due back at five o'clock sharp, and I'll have to ride fast in order to make it. But I wanted to hurry out here, and tell you—to be careful!"

Strafford said nothing, but his eyes widened a little.

"I can't tell you what I mean," the girl went on rapidly. "But—I'm afraid! Of several things. I heard—— But I can't tell you that. I can only tell you that dad is worried about being compelled to shut down the mill within a few weeks. I dare say Mr. Nason is worried too, because it means that he'll be out of a job."

Strafford shook his head. "I pointed out to them that they could keep on logging on a small scale, and that the government would permit them to enter the national forest, if only a tree here and there were taken," he remarked. "But your father wouldn't listen to such a suggestion."

The girl's eyes flashed. "And I don't blame him," she replied. "It's not fair for the government to keep saving this timber year after year, for no good purpose. The trees decay or fires destroy them. Why not let the lumberman cut them, and have it over with?"

"Because the government wants to save this timber for future generations," Jim retorted. "We'll keep out the fires, and the trees which die represent but a small percentage of the total stand. These trees are living things, hundreds of years old——"

The girl broke in impatiently: "I know. You've said that before. But I believe as dad does, that a tree is a tree and worthless until it's converted into lumber. No sentiment about it! However," she added hastily, with a quick smile, "we won't quarrel about it." She swung into the saddle, and turned the horse toward town.

"Don't forget!" she called back over her shoulder. "A warning is a warning, Mr. Forest Ranger!"

Jim saw her ride out of sight before he began the hard climb back to the ledge. He tried to guess what she possibly meant, but no answer that was reasonable suggested itself.

She warned him to be careful. But about what? She had hurried off so fast he had not had time to ask her, assuming that she would have told him. Anyway, he did not see why he should feel disturbed. There was nothing that Cranston or Nason could do about it. He, Jim Strafford, would see that the law was enforced, and that the loggers did not encroach on the national forest. No way getting around that; not even politics could upset the law in this case. The forest belonged to the public.

Nevertheless, he could not shake off a slight feeling of uneasiness. Nor had he done so when he finally drew himself up in the boatswain's chair, and made the cable fast. But he promptly forgot the feeling when, sweeping the forest with his telescope, he descried a telltale plume of smoke six or eight miles to the northeast.

He focused the glass on it, but could make out nothing but that the smoke seemed to be coming from out of a ravine. Evidently it was not serious enough as yet to warrant calling headquarters; it might be a blaze started under the supervision of some fire patrolman.

Yet at the end of ten minutes, as Jim watched it, the blaze appeared to be bigger. He stepped to his telephone, and spun the crank in the call for headquarters.

There was no reply. He tried again, still with the same result. The line was dead. He determined this by calling the ranger at Twin Peaks, fifty miles west of Ranger's Rock, and got no reply. The sound of the bell indicated that the circuit was completed, nevertheless, he could summon no one on the line.

Wondering a little at the circumstance, which had never happened to him before, Jim turned back to look at the distant blaze. It was still there, and the smoke seemed to be coming up more blackly than ever.

Clearly, there was but one thing to do; he would have to visit the scene of the fire himself, although he might get a call through to headquarters from Cranston's mill. The rules were that he must remain on duty at the lookout station; yet, night was coming on, when the smoke of fires would not be visible at a distance, and, anyway, that blaze over there demanded his attention. If he got help through calling over Cranston's telephone, it would take hours before the fire fighters could reach the blaze. On the other hand, he could get to it himself quickly, and, as it did not seem to be large, he believed that he could handle it alone.

Wrapping up a light lunch, and carrying a short-handled ax and a spade, he descended from the rock, and struck out. Unless the blaze was worse than he expected, he counted upon being back home before midnight.

It did not occur to Strafford that anybody saw him leave Ranger's Rock. At a window in Cranston's office, however, Nason smiled and handed his binoculars to his boss.

"Well, it worked," he remarked. "He's gone after that fire."

Old Jabez chuckled, took the glasses, and peered long and intently at the figure of the man descending the rock. As he put down the glasses finally, he clapped Nason on the back.

"We'll make a good job of it," he told the superintendent. "If you're going to take Strafford's place up there on the rock for the next two weeks, you'd better be hustling along. But, if there's a slip to this—well, you're the one who is going to suffer, my boy! Officially, I don't know a thing about this, understand?"

Nason nodded. "There'll be no slip-

up," he replied. "I'll send out Bill Heenan now to take the loop off the telephone wire where we 'bridged' Strafford's phone. For two weeks, I'm to hold Strafford's job up there. If I can't impersonate his voice, it'll be my own fault. And if any forest service men show up in Cranstonville, headed for Ranger's Rock, you're to signal me.

"Meanwhile, Phonse Derieux will take care of Mister Strafford. When it's all over, Derieux will be out of the country, and there'll be no way of pinning the thing on us. In two weeks, if we throw every man we've got into the work, we ought to have practically all of the logs off that strip which we thought was ours. The worst that can happen to us then will be a lawsuit. It's no business of ours if Strafford leaves his post, and gets into trouble out in the hills."

Old Jabez nodded agreement. "Two weeks will be enough," he declared. "I'll promise that much!"

CHAPTER III.

THE TRAP.

ONCE down off the rock, Jim Strafford was impressed with the fact that night was coming swiftly. On the summits the sun still shone, but down here the shadows were lengthening rapidly. He forged on at a fast walk, determined to reach the scene of the fire before darkness overtook him. The plume of smoke still showed ahead in the hills. It seemed to be no larger.

Mile after mile, Strafford went on, finding the going hard, for there was no trail and the undergrowth was dense. Night had come when he climbed a slope, on the other side of which he knew the blaze must be located.

Yet the fire appeared to be out now, for he could no longer see smoke. He paused at last on top of the ridge, and stared down into a shallow valley at the bottom of which a creek twisted itself in and out among the vine-maple and devil-club, and knew that he had come to the origin of the fire.

At the bottom of the valley was a cabin, dark and apparently tenantless. In front of it, however, there still glowed the embers of what had been a large bonfire. So far as Strafford could see, there was nobody about. Determined to get at the bottom of the mystery, and at the same time administer a rebuke to the person who had built such a large fire within the national forest, he went on down the slope, stepping out at last into the waning ring of firelight thrown by the glowing embers.

Still nobody appeared. He called several times, but got no reply.

"Some fool camper went off and left this fire burning," he remarked wrathfully. The creek was but a short distance away and, carrying water in his hat, he quenched the last of the embers. Then he decided to explore the cabin, to find out if he could get some clew to the person who had been there.

At the doorway he paused, for the interior was dark. So far as he could make out, nobody had lived there for some time. Possibly it had been used in bygone years by trappers as a winter base. The roof sagged, and the walls were threatening to fall in. Striking a match, Stafford peered about him.

His eyes fell on a pile of dunnage dumped in the corner. Evidently the person who had started the fire had not departed, after all. Striking another match, he was on the point of moving forward to examine the stuff more closely, when a strong light suddenly flashed in his face, and somebody whispered huskily in his ear:

"Steady, m'sieu'! You are not to move!"

Startled, Stafford half turned, to find himself blinded by the strong glare of a flash light. Nevertheless, he could make out the figure of a big man who held the light in one hand, while the

other he grasped a rifle pointed directly at Strafford's heart.

"What——" began the ranger, but the other interrupted.

"You are not to speak," was the command. "Quick, now, lift ze hands!"

Strafford obeyed automatically, for the reason that he was unarmed, and the unknown had him at a decided disadvantage. As he did so, the stranger moved closer.

"Face to the wall!" was the command, and the ranger, still wondering, did as he was told. The next instant, Strafford felt a noose dropped over his uplifted arms, and jerked tight before he could move. Writhe and twist as he did now, for Jim Strafford was powerfully built, nevertheless, he knew that he was in the grasp of a man stronger than himself. In a twinkling, the stranger held him pinned with arms behind him.

"So!" breathed the unknown, as he laid down the gun and flash light. Then, before he could put up a further struggle, Strafford was securely bound, hand and foot.

Strafford suddenly found his tongue. "Are you crazy?" he demanded. "What's the meaning of this, anyway? I'm a forest ranger, out here to discover who set that fire. What are you trying to do?"

The other chuckled. "Ah, that fire," he remarked. "Eet was wan good trick, eh? You see that fire, and you come straight to me. Ver' smart trick, that fire. Only, I do not think you come so soon. I am glad that you do not make me wait long." He chuckled again, as he went to the dilapidated fireplace and began raking the débris together, with the intention of starting a fire.

"But why?" demanded Strafford. "What's the idea? Do you realize that I'm a government man, here on duty?"

Again the other chuckled. "Eet is as you say," he agreed. "I understand." He busied himself, and soon red flames were leaping up the fireplace.

Strafford fell silent. The thing was incomprehensible. He had never seen this man before. The stranger was a giant in stature, very dark. He might be a French-Canadian. But what was the purpose behind these mysterious actions? Why had he lured Strafford out here to this deserted cabin? Suddenly, Jane's warning came back to him.

"I'm wise to you now!" cried Strafford. "Cranston hired you to do this!"

The other regarded him calmly. "Suppose eet is as you say," he remarked. "What then? Eet weel be hard to prove, m'sieu'. I am Phonse Derieux. Wan time I trap in these mountains. You chase me out because you say I cut too many small trees. That make me ver' angree, m'sieu'. So I punish you in thees way. A good story, eh?" He laughed good-humoredly, shaking his great shoulders.

"It's a lie!" cried Strafford. "I never saw you before. But if you'll turn me loose, I will chase you out of these mountains, faster than you ever traveled before!"

Derieux grinned complacently. "Maybe so eet is a lie," he pointed out. "But eet is my story, and a ver' good wan, too."

"What are you going to do with me?" insisted Strafford.

Derieux shrugged. "Not'ing," he replied, "unless you mek trouble. You and I will camp out here for a leetle while. Maybe we shall become good friends, eh?"

"Camp here?" Jim asked. "What do you mean—you intend to keep me prisoner here?"

Derieux nodded pleasantly, as he began rummaging through his pack, from which he produced food and cooking utensils.

"Eet is so," he said with finality. Thereupon, he began preparing supper. Nor could Strafford, try as he would, get another word out of the giant.

There was no doubt in the ranger's

mind that Cranston was back of this move. The timber baron wanted Strafford out of the way, and had chosen this method. The flimsy yarn which Derieux had given to explain the ranger's capture did not deceive the latter for a moment; yet, flimsy though it was, it would be a talking point should Cranston ever be brought to book for Derieux's act. Cranston would swear that he had nothing to do with it; there would be nothing to prove that Derieux's story was a lie. Yet it was a bold move for all that, but Strafford realized that Cranston was a man accustomed to take long chances in playing for high stakes.

Meanwhile, Derieux got the meal ready. When he had eaten, he got his rifle and then freed Strafford's hands.

"Eet is not that I fear you would escape from Phonse Derieux," he explained. "Me, I could break you in two, mebbe, big though you are. But I do not wish to have to hurt you."

Philosophically, Strafford accepted the situation; indeed, he appeared to be rather content, as though he was conscious of the futility of fighting against such overwhelming odds. In reality, he was sick at the thought of what Cranston would be doing. Of course, there would be a reckoning for the timber baron, but the latter evidently believed that he would risk that, desperate as was his situation, with logs for his mill.

Supper over, Derieux once more secured Strafford's hands, then deposited him on a blanket stretched in the corner. He spread another blanket for himself before the fire, and with the rifle beside him promptly went to sleep. The door had been pulled shut and braced with a stick.

But, although Derieux appeared to slumber heavily, in reality he slept as does a wild animal, as Strafford found out. Sleep was far from the ranger's thoughts, and he turned and twisted until at last he reached a sitting position. Although his movements, as he believed, were noiseless, nevertheless, he became conscious that the giant had roused, and was watching him from partly opened eyes.

Clearly, Jim reasoned, getting away from this hulking big guard was not going to be an easy problem. He lay down again, and finally slumber came to him.

When Jim woke, it was morning, and Derieux was already stirring, although the grayness of dawn had just come. Jim was cramped and stiff from the rope knotted about his wrists and ankles, and Derieux seemed to understand this, for he freed the captive's hands. Jim took advantage of the chance to chafe them, to restore circulation. Nor did he complain when, breakfast finished, Derieux bound him again. The game the ranger had decided upon was a waiting one, although it irked him to be so helpless and inactive.

The day dragged its weary length through, however, without Derieux giving him the slightest opening. It was a day of mental torture for Strafford, too. He guessed that his absence from the lookout station would be missed by the other rangers; but at the same time he did not believe that Cranston would overlook this fact. Doubtless, the timber baron had some way of meeting that probability. In any event, it would be a long time before a searching party would discover the cabin hidden down in this valley, unless blind chance guided their steps.

Darkness came at last, and with it a determination on the part of Strafford to take the first chance that presented itself, no matter how slim it appeared to be. The thought of spending another day here, probably several of them—for he did not believe that Derieux intended to do more than merely hold him prisoner for a time—was maddening. If Cranston's idea was to steal the govern-

ment-owned timber while Strafford was gone, it was likely that the loggers were already busy.

Yet, Strafford had not dropped his rôle of complacency. To Derieux, he seemed resigned. Again the big jailer spread a blanket for Jim in the corner, and again stretched himself before the fireplace. He was instantly asleep.

Jim lay there with eyes closed, thinking, planning some way by which he could escape. Yet each time he moved, Derieux stirred also. Apparently, there was no way to catch the big man napping.

But Jim was making some progress with his bonds. His hands were tied together so securely that it was difficult to work the rope free. But if Derieux did not discover what the captive was doing, it would only be a matter of a short time before Jim would have his hands loose. Then, if he could get his feet free, he would take a chance with Derieux, big and powerful though the latter was.

Time wore on. At last, Jim knew that his objective was in sight, for he felt the last knot loosen on his hands. At that moment, however, he would have sworn that he heard a stealthy footstep just outside the cabin.

Derieux slept on. Holding his breath for fear the giant would awaken, Jim hurriedly freed his hands, and began on the rope securing his feet. This time he was positive that he heard somebody moving outside.

Then to his ears came the faint nicker of a horse.

Instantly, Derieux was sitting bolt upright, but not before Jim had dropped flat feigning sleep. Through half-closed lids, Jim saw the giant regard him dourly, then get up and move silently to the door, rifle in hand. Derieux silently took away the stick which braced the panel shut, and stepped out into the night. Again came the distant nicker of the horse.

Jim heard Derieux moving away in the darkness, and knew that no time must be lost. Fortunately, Derieux had not taken away the ranger's pocket-knife. Hurriedly getting this out, and opening the sharp blade, Jim freed his feet, and stood up.

For a moment he swayed uncertainly, as his cramped muscles refused to function. But he forced himself to the door, and out into the night. Cautiously he moved away, but the blackness was so intense that he could not see where he was going.

A stick broke under his feet. He heard a shout from Derieux, who had apparently returned to the cabin, and discovered the absence of the prisoner. Jim broke into a run.

Behind him, he heard Derieux pounding along in pursuit. Yet the blackness baffled the pursuer as much as it did the pursued. Prickly pains shot through Jim's legs as the blood sluggishly resumed circulation. The agony was acute, but he managed to stagger ahead. Yet he knew that Derieux was gaining on him. Something had to be done, for Jim knew that so long as he kept running, Derieux would hear him and, unhampered by cramped muscles, would overtake him. The giant was armed, and it was uncertain to just what lengths he would go in carrying out the orders which Cranston had undoubtedly given him.

There was but one thing to do, and that was to make a stand. Groping in the darkness until he found a broken limb which would serve as a club, the ranger backed into a windfall, and waited.

CHAPTER IV.

THE RUSE.

IMMEDIATELY, Jim heard Derieux stop back there in the darkness, as though suddenly aware that an ambush might lie ahead. For a few minutes the big man stood there; then, judging by

the sounds, he began cautiously beating the bushes.

With uncanny skill, he held straight to a course which would take him to the ranger's hiding place, and grimly, Strafford took a firmer grasp on the club, and set himself. Presently, Jim was aware that Derieux was but a few feet distant, for he could hear his breathing. Still, in the blackness which lay under the great trees it was impossible for either to see the other, and Jim knew that he would have to make that first blow count, for Derieux would fire before a second could be struck.

For the third time, the horse—now nearer, it seemed—nickered plaintively.

Apparently, Derieux was doing some ponderous thinking. As he crouched there, hardly daring to breathe for fear the other would hear him, Jim surmised that the presence of a horse had nonplused the pursuer. Almost, Jim could followed Derieux's reasoning. Derieux doubtless guessed that the horse might indicate the presence of a ranger searching for the missing fire spotter. It might have been, too, that Derieux feared Strafford had slipped away in the darkness, and was making for the horse. in any event, Jim breathed a sudden sigh of relief, for he heard the big man moving off.

Jim could not even hazard a wild guess as to whom the horse belonged, unless it was, indeed, a ranger. Nor did he care particularly at that moment; he knew only that he had a chance to make his escape, and he took it without hesitation. His aim now was to get back to Ranger's Rock, to surprise Cranston and Nason. The safest thing was to get clear of the puzzled Derieux and the latter's rifle.

Fixing his direction, Jim struck out. His legs were no longer cramped now, and he knew that he could make good time. But he moved stealthily, for he had no desire to play another game of hide-and-seek with Derieux. Once back on the job he'd take care of Derieux! At that, the giant was merely the tool of Cranston. There was bigger game in sight.

Steadily, Jim held toward Ranger's Rock, and as he went on, a crescent moon lifted above the horizon to light his way. Despite the hard going, he made good time, yet, the east was beginning to pale with the false dawn when he finally reached the foot of the steep trail leading to the station. Fifteen minutes of climbing, and he was at the bottom of the tramway.

He paused, then, for he saw that instead of being at the bottom of the tramway, as he had left it, the boatswain's chair was at the top! This could mean only one thing, that somebody was up in the station. But who that person could be, there was no telling.

It might easily be one of the other rangers, sent up from headquarters when Strafford's absence was discovered through failure to answer his telephone. The more he thought of it, the more this seemed to be a probability. Well, he was back now, and ready to make his report. But first he'd have to rout out the relief man, and get up to the station, to use the telephone.

Cupping his hands, he yelled at the top of his voice to the man in the station. Then he listened, and it seemed that he heard a movement up there. But no reply came back. Puzzled a little, Jim called again. Still no reply.

The thing was suspicious. There was no question but that the occupant of the station heard him, no matter how sound a sleeper the unknown might be, for the station was only sixty feet above where Strafford stood. But it was still too dark to do more than see the outlines of the building, for the light of the false dawn had faded, leaving darkness. By the same token, the man above could not see him down here at the foot of the tramway.

Aroused, Strafford knew that he was going to get up to the tower. He debated climbing the tramway, but if the man up there was watching, it would be comparatively easy to loosen one of the supporting wires, or even push a rock off from above. Another plan suggested itself.

Around a corner of the ledge, out of sight of whoever was at the station, were a series of narrow shelves. These offered precarious hand and footholds and, in addition, there was a precipice of at least two hundred feet into which he might drop if he missed his footing. Only Strafford, familiar as he was with the rock, knew of this route, and he had never climbed it. But he was determined enough now to take the chance. Slipping out of sight of whoever was watching at the head of the tramway, he cautiously worked around the shoulder of the ledge. Feeling above him in the darkness, he found a handhold, and lifted himself.

Slowly, he went up, pausing now and then to catch his breath, for the strain of lifting his weight thus was terrific. Moreover, he had to move in the utmost silence, if his surprise was going to be effective. Foot by foot he climbed, while over the eastern hills spread the dawn. At last, he drew himself over the edge of the cliff, and lay there fighting to regain his breath. The advantage was with him now, for he was on the opposite side of the station from where it overlooked the tramway. Nevertheless, the light was strong enough now so that he could be seen if the unknown was keeping a lookout in all directions. On hands and knees, Strafford crawled across the intervening space, and found himself at last at the foot of the porch which ran around the four sides of the building.

He was convinced that he had not been seen. The interior of the station was dark, but there was no question that its occupant was wide awake and watching. Carefully, so as to make no noise, Strafford got up on the porch, and tiptoed to the back door. He was turning the knob slowly when sudden commotion broke out inside the place.

There were two doors to the station, and now Strafford heard the other thrown open, then slammed. He leaped inside, charged across the room, and flung back the door which had just been closed. But as he did so, he heard the rattle of the tramway. The unknown was escaping!

In a few, hurried steps, Strafford was at the tramway, but too late. All he could see was the form of a man in the boatswain's chair, shooting earthward. Moreover, there was no way to follow, unless Strafford slid down the cable. This he did, mentally berating himself for not having cut off the means of escape before trying to enter the station. But when he reached the bottom, the stranger had vanished down the trail.

Jim shrugged and turned back. He would have given much to know the identity of the man who had been occupying Ranger's Rock, but that would have to wait now. Lifting himself in the boatswain's chair up the tramway once more, he went to the telephone, and called headquarters.

After a few moments, Harkins, the chief ranger, answered, and Strafford made a brief report of what had happened.

"Cranston's back of it," Harkins decided; "but there's no way of proving his connection with the plot. We didn't even know you were gone. Somebody who impersonated you made the regular reports yesterday. Thought the voice sounded different from yours, but everything seemed to be regular, so I didn't really get suspicious.

"The only thing to do now is to keep watch on Cranston. If he's started in on the government timber, we've got him dead to rights; but I don't think he's had time to get his men and outfit

into the woods. Anyway, we'll do a little scouting from this end. Meanwhile, keep your eyes open. We'll start a search for this man Derieux. But if he's a good woodsman, which he probably is, it isn't likely that we'll run him down right away."

What Harkins had said made one feature of the situation more puzzling than ever to Strafford. Who was the mysterious rider whose presence had distracted Derieux's attention at the critical moment? Certainly it had not been one of Harkins' men, for the chief had said that no search had been started. The thing was puzzling, yet Strafford did not give himself time to dwell upon it.

He got himself a hasty breakfast, after observing that everything was in order at the station. Apparently the occupant of the place had made no attempt to rifle his belongings.

Then with the sun well up, Jim betook himself to the room whence he was able to look out over the government-owned domain. With his telescope, he began searching the forest for signs of fire—as well as the activities of Cranston. The lookout at Ranger's Rock was on the job once more.

CHAPTER V.

DESPERATE PLANS.

DOWN at the mill, Jabez Cranston was in a towering rage.

"You've failed!" he cried to Nason, shaking a finger at his superintendent. "Everything is balled up! We're got everything ready, and this morning we'd have started in on that timber. But, instead of keeping Strafford out of the picture for two weeks, you've kept him out less than thirty hours!"

Nason looked uncomfortable. "I can't guess what happened out there in the woods at Derieux's cabin," he remarked. "I've ordered Bill Heenan to send a man out there and get the truth from Derieux. All I know is that early this morning I discovered that Strafford was back. He nearly had me cornered up there on the rock, but I got away without his learning my identity. So far, he can't prove a thing. He may be suspicious, but it's small good that'll do him."

He stopped, as a rap came at the door. As Nason opened it, a short thick-set man stood framed there. This was Heenan, woods foreman for the Cranston outfit, and a man on whom Nason knew he could rely.

"Well," demanded Cranston brusquely, "what did you learn?"

Heenan shook his head. "Derieux is keepin' out of sight," he reported. "We had a hard time locatin' him. He doesn't know exactly how Strafford got away, but swears that he had help, that somebody, probably another ranger, was out there last night, lookin' for him."

Cranston snorted. "Derieux's dumb as he is big," the timber baron declared. "You tell him to keep hidden out, if he knows what's good for him. He's balled up things to a fare-thee-well. If the rangers get Derieux, he need expect no help from me. Well," he went on, turning to Nason, "what's this other plan you spoke about, in the event the first one failed, which it unquestionably did?"

Nason smiled. He was beginning to regain some of his lost self-esteem, jarred loose by the unexpected twist of events.

"It's simple, Mr. Cranston," he replied, "but it's a bit desperate. I'm not sure that I should ever mention it, much less advise that you go into it. However, it's worth trying."

Old Jabez reddened. If there was one certain way to get him to do a thing—as Nason understood very well—it was to suggest that it was too daring.

"Get on with it," declared Cranston

shortly. "Desperate it may be, but I'm desperate myself. Let's hear it!"

Nasson nodded. "The beauty of my plan," he explained, "is its simplicity. We want the timber in the national forest. So we merely go out and get it."

"You talk riddles," broke in Cranston. "How do we get it? Let's hear the rest of it."

Again Nason smiled. "Suppose a very disastrous fire broke out in the national forest?" he asked softly. "It wouldn't burn the live trees—they're too big, and they're green timber—although it would sweep the underbrush. But it would kill those trees! And, in a couple of years or so, the beetles would ruin them.

"Now, this fire would only kill the green timber, but would not otherwise harm it. Yet, the government, realizing that the timber would be useless unless logged immediately, would be glad to allow us, for a very nominal sum—maybe nothing at all—to salvage the dead trees by sending in our crews at once.

"Moreover, the fire might occur in a manner that would reflect no credit on our alert friend atop Ranger's Rock. If he were put 'in bad,' so to speak, the forest service might displace him. Then, when we have logged the fire-killed timber, we may have a new government representative here—one who is more likely to listen to reason. Simple isn't it?"

Both Cranston and Heenan regarded Nason with widened eyes. The plan which he suggested was more daring than any which had occurred in the wildest dreams of the timber-hungry Cranston. For a moment the old man seemed stunned by the proposal; yet quick admiration leaped into the eyes of Bill Heenan.

"Nason," said Jabez after a moment, "you're the coldest-blooded man I've ever known—and the smartest. My hat's off to you! But—if word of this got out. If there was a slip-up——"

Nason shrugged. "There won't be," he assured his employer. "Even if there was, they could only charge us with setting a fire maliciously. I dare say our lawyers could drag out a case like that indefinitely. But there'll be no slip-up."

"How are you going to keep Strafford out of it?" demanded Cranston.

This time, the superintendent's smile was almost pleasant to see.

"We'll see that Strafford's telephone is fixed so that he can't report the fire until it is well under way," Nason explained. "Likewise, we'll keep him up there while the blaze is going on. There are only two ways for him to get off the rock—come down the tramway, or descend the cliff where he climbed it this morning. Both ways will be closed to him. You can leave that to Heenan, here, and myself."

Cranston was silent, but there was an eager light in his eyes. He knew that Nason spoke truth, that a forest fire would not destroy the giants over which Strafford stood guard, but that it would kill them. And the government would gladly let him go into the national forest, and log the burned area.

"We've got our equipement ready," went on Nason. "The fire will start tonight, soon after dark. By to-morrow, there'll be enough timber killed to keep our mill going for two or three years."

Old Jabez sighed. "It sounds tough," he remarked, "but I guess it's the only way. I'll leave it to you, Nason."

CHAPTER VI.

HUNGRY FLAMES.

ALL that day, Strafford kept an unusually sharp watch over his beloved trees. With his telescope, he saw that Cranston's outfit had not yet crossed the boundary into the national forest. But he likewise noted that

preparations had been made for the raid which had been called off by his unexpected return. He smiled grimly as he saw the coils of steel cable, the heavy bunked trucks, the piles of supplies. Cranston would not need those now!

And, likewise, Strafford thought of Jane. She had taken the trouble to warn him. Unquestionably that warning had applied to the plan of Derieux's which, happily enough, had been frustrated. Yet the girl had been loyal enough to her father when Strafford had criticized the old timber baron. It semed, however, that she did not approve of the underhand methods which Cranston, instigated by Nason, no doubt, had been applying in the bitter fight to get timber for the big mills.

In any event, Strafford reflected, she had been kind; but at the same time she was definitely in the enemy's camp. Well, it made small difference. Despite his secret regard for her, there was no chance that she would ever be interested in a mere forest ranger, no matter how romantic the calling might appear to an outsider. Nor would old Jabez ever consider such a situation. Nason was the type of man—successful, aggressive—which the timber baron would choose for his daughter.

Anyway, Strafford told himself, he was asking no favors. No hopeless love affair was going to stand between him and his duty. He was going to guard the forest from the depredations of Cranston and his kind; he was going to live up to the name of The Keeper of the Giants, as the Indians had dubbed him, and no timber-hungry crowd was going to stop him. Still—he could not quite get the girl out of his thoughts.

The day dragged on. Seated in the observation tower, Stafford felt sleep creeping on him. He dozed in his chair, but always woke guiltily, to sweep the forest with his telescope for sign of fire, or direct the inquisitive eye of the glass on the Cranston mill, down in the valley. Yet all was peaceful—too peaceful, it seemed.

Early in the afternoon he called up Harkins once more, and reported that all was quiet.

"Cranston's quit," Harkins guessed. "I don't think you'll have any more trouble with him."

"I'm not so sure of that," Strafford replied. "Don't like the looks of the weather, either. Everything is powder dry."

"Well, keep an extra close watch," the chief came back. "We'll have the boys in readiness down here, in case trouble starts. By the way, they haven't found any sign of Derieux. Got a report from Granite Bluff that they'd located the cabin, though. I'll send out another scouting party to-morrow."

Afternoon found Jim battling with sleep. For nearly thirty-six hours now he had succeeded in getting only cat naps. He promised himself that when night came, and it was no longer possible for him to see the telltale warning smoke which indicated the start of a fire in the forest, he would catch up with a vengeance on his lost slumber.

Supper eaten, and still nearly two hours to go until darkness! The sinking sun glowed readily through the haze which hung persistently over the firmatted hills. But within the radius of his vision there was no sign that the forest was threatened.

He closed his eyes, intending to doze for only a moment. Yet when he opened them again, he saw that the sun had vanished; night was at hand. One more look at all quarters of the forest—yet no menace was in sight.

Then he became aware that somebody was calling his name. He walked out on the porch. and peered over the ledge. Down at the base of the tramway was Jane Cranston!

She was signaling to him to lower the boatswain's chair. Wondering, Jim

obeyed, and presently the girl stood on the porch beside him. There was an air of suppressed excitement about her.

"I don't know what you'll think of me," she said hurriedly, "but this was the only way. I had to come. I'm not sure, but I think that I was followed by one of Nason's men. So I left my horse down in the brush, off the trail, and climbed up to the rock alone. You've got to get word to headquarters to send men here at once!"

Strafford regarded her curiously.

"Why?" he asked.

She shook her head impatiently. "I can't tell you that," she replied. "Oh, sometimes I hate myself for being such a traitor to dad! But I know that if he goes through with his plans, something dreadful will happen. He's mad to keep the mill going, and, with Nason to urge him on, he'll stop at nothing. He doesn't seem to realize that he's fighting the government."

"But why do I need help?" insisted Strafford. "He daren't cut the government timber."

She flashed a look at him.

"Will you believe me when I say that they've devised another way to beat you?" she asked. "They'll do it, too! But it will give Nason, Heenan, and their crowd, a hold over dad that can't be broken. I can't tell you more—not without incriminating my own father. But if the forest rangers are here, perhaps dad won't go through with the plan!"

Jim turned to the telephone.

"I'll bank on what you say," he told her. "You gave me one straight warning that I ignored, and I walked into a trap. If it hadn't been for a break of luck, I'd be out there in the woods now, a captive!"

The girl smiled. "I know," she said, "because I was there last night! It took me all day to find the cabin where you were being held. Then, after you made your escape, I had a hard time getting clear of Derieux, and finding my horse. I was going to make him turn you loose."

"You!" cried Jim incredulously. "It was you who helped me get away?"

The girl sighed. "I've been doing my best to keep dad out of a mess that may land him in prison," she declared. "But will you hurry now, and do as I told you?"

Without another word, Jim spun the crank of the telephone. The bell rang clearly. But no answer came back. Again and again he tried.

"No use," he said finally. "The same thing happened just before I spotted that fake forest fire—and went out to make the acquaintance of Phonse Derieux."

"Of course!" exclaimed the girl. "I should have remembered. They've bridged your telephone so that you can't get headquarters! Quick!" she added. "The only thing to do now is to get down to the mill and use the telephone there. They'll try to stop you, but it's the only way!"

He gazed at her admiringly. There was something in his look which made her flush. "Jane—Miss Cranston——" he began haltingly, but she cut him off hurriedly.

"Please!" she begged. "There's not a moment to spare, if you're going to get that warning through to headquarters. Oh, if you only knew what dad—what Mr. Nason plans to do!"

Jim checked himself. "You're right!" he told her. "I have no business saying—what I intended to say, anyway!"

He stepped out on the porch. Night was at hand now, and the valley was already in darkness, with the lights of Cranstonville twinkling like distant stars.

Suddenly she gave a cry, and pointed off to the southwest, beyond the town, and at the edge of that disputed strip of land.

"A fire!" she exclaimed. "I told you to hurry!"

But Strafford turned upon her, clutched her arm. "They did that?" he demanded in a queer voice. "They set fire to the forest?". Then, without waiting for an answer: "Come on! I'll get every man jack of them, your father included! They've gone too far this time. I've got the goods on them at last!"

He hurried toward the tramway which would carry them below. But there he stopped, staring at what he saw. Suddenly he laughed, a hard, mirthless laugh.

"What is it?" Jane demanded.

"The tramway," he told her. He pointed to the cables, which had been loosened at the bottom, and spread far apart. "They've tampered with it, fixed it so that we can't get down. We're trapped up here!"

Again he examined the handiwork of Nason's men. The thing had been handled with malicious cleverness. The cables were pulled apart and fastened in such a way that not only was the boatswain's chair useless, but if any one attempted to slide down hand over hand, the cables would tear loose at the bottom, and dash him against the side of the cliff.

"There's one other way!" Strafford told her. "I can go down the way I climbed up this morning."

"But what about me?" Jane demanded. "I can't stay up here alone!"

"You'll have to," he told her shortly. "Anyway, you'll be safe enough."

A moment later he was at the spot where he had scaled the cliff early that morning. He looked below, studying the narrow ledges. Then he got up, shook his head, and laughed again.

"Don't!" cried the girl, for there was in his mirth a ring which made her shiver. "What is it?"

He pointed below. "They're thorough; I'll say that much for them," he asserted. "They've worked some of the rocks loose, and greased the others. A monkey couldn't get down that way!"

Suddenly he turned on her, as though he would pour his wrath upon her head.

"But I'm not through yet!" he cried. "If your father and Nason think I'm going to sit up here and watch that forest burn, they're mistaken. There's one trick that they overlooked!"

He hurried back to the station. She saw him strip the blankets off his bed, and begin tearing them in his strong hands. Instantly she guessed the meaning of it—a rope down which the two could slide to the ledge below.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SPOILSMEN.

NERVOUSLY, Jabez Cranston paced back and forth in his office. He was alone. Several times within the last ten minutes mill workers had come to call his attention to the fire, to ask for instructions. But each time he sent these well-meaning employees away with a curt reminder that it was none of their business, that the government paid men to fight such fires.

Nevertheless, he was profoundly worried, even though this latest and most daring plan of Nason's seemed to be working out perfectly. For the first time it occurred to the arrogant old timber man that he had placed himself at the mercy of other men, a situation which was intolerable to him. If Nason Heenan, or any of the others whom he had trusted, decided to tell their story to the authorities, he would be placed in a hazardous position. He might even go to prison. The thought suddenly beaded his forehead with cold moisture.

He did not fear a civil lawsuit; he had competent attorneys who could look after that, and, in any event, he would only stand to lose money. But the realization that he might be deprived of

his liberty, if what he had done ever became known, was something entirely different.

"Probably I shouldn't have done it," he reflected. "Still," he went on, justifying himself, "something had to be done. Nason was right. Better for all concerned, better for the town, if the mill and camps keep going. And I can't quit lumbering! I'm not ready to retire.

"Thank heaven, Jane doesn't know the truth! Yet, she doubtless suspects something is wrong. Still, she's a Cranston, even though she wouldn't approve. Perhaps I should have taken her into it, got her opinion. But that would have made Nason sneer. No, Nason was right. But I wish to the blue blazes he'd get back here! This inaction is driving me crazy!"

As though in answer to his prayer, there came a tap on the outer door.

"Who's there?" Jabez demanded, thinking that it was some other townsman coming to tell him about the fire.

"It's me, dad!" came Jane's voice. I've got to see you—at once!"

He hurried to the door, opened it. He saw her standing there, pale, excited. And, behind her, was the accusing figure of Jim Strafford.

"You!" cried old Jabez, as though he could not believe his eyes. He fell back a step, for Strafford had pushed forward. Suddenly the old man recovered, whirled on his daughter.

"Jane!" he cried disbelievingly. "You brought him here?"

She nodded, her eyes swimming with tears. "It's for the best, dad," she told Jabez. "Oh, dad, can't you see that it's for the best? You've trusted Nason and the others too long. They'll fail you, and it will be you who will suffer. And myself! You're fighting the government, dad. Can't you realize that even now?"

But Jabez continued to regard her blankly.

"You brought him here," he repeated, pointing to Strafford. "Why, girl, you have betrayed your own father!"

"Only because I'm trying to save you, dad," she insisted. "Won't you please believe it?"

"She's right, Cranston," Strafford put in. "If you get out of this at all, it will be on her account. I'm giving you one chance—and ten seconds to consider it! I'm going to call headquarters now, and get the gang busy on that fire. Either I tell them that you're sending every available man to help fight the blaze, or I tell them how it was started.

"Quick, now, choose!"

But old Jabez seemed incapable of decision. He stood there regarding Strafford blackly, until suddenly the ranger cried:

"Time's up!"

Quickly he crossed to the telephone on the wall, put in the call. Before he could be connected, however, he swung around to confront the old man, who had rushed at him.

"Blast you!" cried Cranston. "You'll never live to send me to jail!" He caught up a chair and swung it at Strafford, who dodged, yet did not relinquish his post at the telephone.

"Dad!" screamed Jane, and caught the old man by the arms. "Dad! Have you lost your senses?"

"Keep him away!" ordered Strafford. "I'm going to put this call through if I have to kill him in order to do it." Ignoring Cranston then, the ranger swung about to face the telephone, for he heard Harkins' voice on the line. But what Strafford did not hear was the sudden opening of the office door.

"Strafford talking," he cried hurriedly. "From Cranstonville; my phone's out of order. Big fire three miles east of town. Need every man you can——"

But he did not finish, for Cranston's voice cut in shrilly:

"Quick, Nason! Get him!"

CHAPTER VIII.

CORNERED.

THEN, Strafford dropped the phone to whirl and meet the attack of Nason, who was rushing at him and at the same time tugging at a gun. Gone was all the suave serenity on Nason's face now; he was murderous. Behind him was Heenan. But the very fact that the superintendent was trying to get out his gun instead of closing with his man, proved his undoing.

Strafford met him with a jolting upper-cut, which halted him. But only for a fraction of a second. With his left fist, Nason swung at Strafford's face, at the same instant jerking the gun free. Jim ducked, but not quickly enough, and the blow staggered him. But as the gun was raised, the ranger bored in again. With his left hand he struck down the gun, and with his right he landed full on the superintendent's jaw.

Nason fell back, dazed, the gun clattering to the floor; but Strafford, overlooking no opportunity, for he realized that the odds were three to one, struck again. Nason dropped.

Heenan would have rushed in, then, but Strafford had recovered the gun, and its menacing muzzle halted the foreman. Both Cranston and Heenan stood there glaring at the ranger, nor did they pay any attention to Nason, "out" so far as the fight was concerned.

"Back up against that wall!" ordered Strafford. "Keep clear, Jane! I'm not taking a chance with anybody to-night!"

He took a step forward, and the two retreated. "I gave you your chance, Cranston," he went on, "but you wouldn't take it. Now I've got the lot of you—and I'm going to use that phone!"

But the girl suddenly stepped in front of the telephone.

"You'll do no such thing!" she cried. "I've helped you--for dad's sake—but if he's making his last stand, I'm with him! I'm a Cranston—and I'm his daughter!"

For an instant, Strafford seemed to forget himself, as he regarded her curiously. Nor could he hide the admiration in his eyes, as she stood there defying him. But his face hardened.

"Listen to me!" he commanded. "This thing has gone too far. Every second of delay means that the fire is getting away deeper into the forest.

"Get away from that phone!"

He caught Jane by the wrist, and she winced under his strong grip.

"You—you coward!" she raged. Yet he held her helpless, ignoring the blows she rained on him with her free hand. "You brute! You cowardly brute!"

A hoarse cry came from old Jabez.

"Strafford, I'll kill you—gun or no gun!" But it was his daughter who stopped him.

"Don't, dad! He'll shoot!"

But Strafford suddenly put her away from him.

"Get over there where you belong!" he told her. "Over there with the rest of the gang! I'm going to show your father and the rest of his crowd what it means to set fire to my forest!"

Ignoring her, then, he caught up the receiver, which had been hanging off the hook during the scuffle.

"Hello! he cried, and instantly Harkins' voice came back excitedly.

"What's up, Jim? You having a battle down there? By the powers, I'll show 'em what happens when they jump one of my men! Who is it? Cranston's gang?"

Words were on Strafford's lips, but he caught sight of the girl's face. She was pleading, with her eyes.

"Tell you about it later," he said to Harkins. "Is the crew on its way to the blaze?"

"Left here five minutes ago, on the jump," was the reply. "You tell me what's wrong—now!"

But Strafford jammed up the phone without answer.

"Cranston," he told the timber man, "I'm giving you still another chance. It means more to me to get that fire out than it does to send you to prison. I'll bargain with you. Turn out everybody and fight that blaze, and I'll keep the truth from Harkins."

"Will you do it?"

Jane broke in: "Please, dad! For my sake, please!"

Indecision was written on the old man's face. He realized that he was beaten, yet he was reluctant to give in. Suddenly, Heenan, who was standing close beside Cranston, said something out of the corner of his mouth, something which Strafford could not catch.

Yet the ranger saw Cranston stiffen, saw that both Cranston and Heenan were looking behind him.

An old, old trick! Strafford had heard of it before. They wanted to distract his attention, and then jump him together.

"Well?" he barked at Cranston. "Made up your mind? I'm not going to wait much longer, man!"

Then Cranston suddenly came to life. Behind Strafford there was the crash of a breaking window pane. He spun about, tried to leap back, but there was not time. He was borne flat under a heavy body just as he heard Heenan's triumphant cry:

"Attaboy, Phonse! You've got him!"

Then Strafford knew that he was battling, hand-to-hand, with the giant French-Canadian.

CHAPTER IX.

THE ANCIENT CODE.

THAT first smashing impact, as Derieux leaped on him from behind, sent Strafford sprawling. One arm, his right, struck the leg of a table, and the gun slipped from his fingers. But as he fell, he writhed free of the giant's loose grip. The next instant he was on his feet.

But Derieux was up likewise. And then began a battle which will endure in the annals of Northwest woodsmen for years to come. Strafford was a big man, incredibly strong, but Derieux was bigger and probably stronger. But the ranger had the advantage of fighting science, and now, as the giant smashed at him with flailing, sledge-hammer blows, Strafford countered or avoided them entirely, while at the same time he drove home punch after punch.

What else was going on in the room at that time, Strafford had but the faintest idea, so occupied was he with the fight before him. But he did glimpse something which thrilled him.

He saw Heenan jump for the gun which he, Strafford, had dropped. But before the brawny hand of the woods boss reached it, a small feminine hand caught it up. Above the turmoil, Strafford heard Jane Cranston cry out:

"Back where you were! Keep him away, dad, or I'll shoot!" But at that instant a glancing blow from Derieux's heavy fist almost stunned Strafford. The ranger staggered back, dazed, on the defensive. Derieux, with a shout on his lips, for he was fighting joyously, bored in.

"That, m'sieu'!" he roared. "And that!" Terrific, driving blows which, had they landed squarely, might have killed Strafford. But he took only the spent force of them, and, rallying quickly, twice smashed his fist full in Derieux's swarthy face.

The giant grunted, bewildered for an instant, and Strafford knew that it was now or never. He feinted, side stepped, swung once more.

Derieux was sagging. Again, Strafford moved aside. But a foot was thrust before him. He stumbled, tried to recover, but went down, and at the same moment heard Derieux's bellow of triumph. Likewise, Heenan's shout.

And Strafford knew that it was the woods boss who had treacherously tripped him.

"The boots, Phonse!" cried Heenan. "Give him the boots!"

Strafford, fallen on his face, had rolled over as he sought to rise. But, like lightning, the meaning of Heenan's cry impinged on his brain. He was calling upon Derieux to exact the terrible penalty which fighting loggers visit upon a fallen foe. Out of the corner of his eye he saw the giant gather himself for the leap. Strafford could almost feel the sharp, punishing calks of the big man's heavy boots tearing into the flesh of his face. In that same fleeting, infinitesimal part of time he knew that he could not roll clear before the boots would descend.

"Voilà!" cried Derieux, as his muscles gathered themselves. And then came the roar of the gun in Jane's hands, and the sharp crash of glass as the bullet, just missing Derieux's body, broke a picture hanging on the wall.

The giant hesitated, startled. But that hesitation was enough. Before Derieux could recover, Strafford had rolled clear, and had gained his feet. Even as the slow brain of the giant sought to comprehend, Strafford struck. Once, twice, came the hard, crushing blows—and the big man crashed to the floor, even as a giant fir falls in the forest. He was momentarily stunned, yet by no means out. Strangely enough, he fell close beside Nason, who, beginning to revive, was already moaning.

Strafford swung about on Heenan, but that worthy was hesitant. Behind the ranger, Jane cried out sharply, "Dad! Don't! Don't!" And then Strafford was confronted by Cranston, gun in hand, holding back the girl.

"Fighter, are you?" grated the old man. "Well, fight this!" And the gun-muzzle described an arc. "Stick up your hands. You're my prisoner!"

Battered, clothing torn, his breath coming in gasps, Strafford stood there. His bloodshot eyes bored into those of the older man. Suddenly he took a step forward.

"Shoot!" he cried to Cranston. "Shoot, if you dare! But before I die, I'll finish you and that hulking coward who's afraid to fight!" He took another step, and now the gun muzzle was almost at his broad chest.

"Shoot!" he urged.

"Let him have it!" cried Heenan suddenly. But Jane, with a scream, flung herself on the gun arm of her father. Even then he was beaten, weakened under the glare of Strafford's eyes.. He broke, suddenly, swiftly. Still holding the gun, he gathered his daughter in his arms.

"You win, Strafford," he told the ranger in a quavering, cracked voice. "I'm licked. I was wrong all the time, and I knew it. And now I'm licked!"

Strafford caught him by the arm. "I'm still holding open a chance for you, Cranston," he cried. "I'd rather save those trees than send you to jail. Get your men busy fighting that fire. Harkins needs help!"

He pointed out of the window at a growing red glow against the sky. "One chance to undo what you've done," he insisted.

Abruptly, Cranston came to life, After that moment of weakness, he was the same, dominant timber man that he had always been, a man who had driven his way to the top by sheer force of will power. He leaped for the telephone.

"Get me the mill engine-room!" he barked. "Quick!" A few moments later, the hoarse voice of the steam siren was blaring a summons to every man in Cranstonville who could be spared. Never did the siren sound except in case of utmost emergency.

"They'll come a-running," Cranston told Strafford. "Take 'em! Use 'em as you will!" His lip curled at sight of Nason rising from the floor. Against

the wall stood Heenan, still undecided what part he was to play. But from the giant Derieux, who had just gained his feet, there came a throaty shout.

"Me, I go fight that fire with you, m'sieu'!" he roared at Strafford. "I like to fight alongside ze only man who ever lick me in fair fight!" His broad shoulders filled the door as he followed Strafford out into the night.

CHAPTER X.

THE KEEPER OF GIANTS.

DAWN was breaking over the Skokomish National Forest, a hazy dawn, with the sun lifting a bleared, reddish eye above the hills. High in the heavens was the haze from the fire that had been, but was no more, for the combined forces of Harkins' men, coupled with Cranston's army led by Jim Strafford, had done their work well. Not only was the fire out, but it had been extinguished with but little damage to the forest giants who still lifted their heads up into the sky with the same living pride as they had done for centuries past. Harkins' men had returned to headquarters, while the Cranston forces were wearily seeking their beds.

But sleep had not come yet to Jim Strafford. Tired almost to the point of wanting to lie down anywhere and sleep, he had made his way back along the trail to the foot of Ranger's Rock. After all, he was, as the Indians had said, The Keeper of Giants, and, despite his weariness, a day of watchfulness over the forest in which he took pride was ahead of him.

Yet he had a feeling of satisfaction such as he had not known before. The forest was now safe. He would trust himself to spot such incipient fires as started within its domain, and the trained fire-fighters of Harkins would see to it that such blazes were promptly quenched. And the other danger, from timber-hungry men—that was gone now. He need fear old Jabez Cranston no longer.

But it had been a hard fight, and Jim was glad that it was over. In a sense, though, he felt it had been futile as regards his future happiness. True, he had conducted himself in the eyes of Jane Cranston as befits a man, but the gulf between them was now wider than ever. Though she had fought beside him, had saved his life when Derieux would have killed or at least severely wounded him, there was a gulf now between them that seemingly could not be bridged. He had virtually put Jabez Cranston out of business. The timber man would not forget that, nor would his daughter. In addition, with her background of breeding and accomplishments, she was not the kind of girl who could ever become seriously interested in a mere forest ranger.

It had been that way at the beginning, and the situation had not changed in the slightest, as Strafford saw it. Therefore, he consoled himself, he had not lost that which he had never possessed. With this philosophical comfort, he set about repairing the tramway which had been tampered with by Nason's men the previous night. Back to the old job once more, and try to forget!

Yet before he had gone far with his work, he was interrupted by the sound of hoofbeats coming up the trail. He saw Jane riding toward him, and he stopped work while she came up.

Even then he wondered why she had thus come. In contrast to his disheveled appearance, she seemed as neat and fresh as though she had slept soundly and had just risen, although he guessed that probably she had found as little opportunity for slumber as he had himself. As she swung off her horse, she smiled, and he smiled back, with a futile attempt to wipe off some of the accumulation of smoke and grime from his features.

"Another warning?" he bantered. He felt his pulse quicken a little at the realization that never had she sought him out unless there was something important to tell him.

"Another warning," she replied, "but a different one this time. First, however, I want to tell you the news. Dad is through with lumbering. I've prevailed upon him to retire."

Strafford nodded grimly. "I rather expected that," he replied. "He hasn't any timber left."

"But that doesn't mean that the mill is going to cease operations," she retorted. "Nor does it mean that Cranstonville is to become a deserted timber town. He's turned everything over to me!"

"To you?" asked Strafford blankly.

Jane nodded importantly "From now on," she replied, "I'm the big boss—the timber baroness, you might say. And I'm going to keep the mill and Cranstonville going.

"And I'm going to do it without trying to outwit the government. You pointed out yourself that the government will give us a permit to operate in the national forest, provided we take only a tree here and there, and the work is done under supervision of the forest service."

Strafford's eyes brightened.

"You'll make good at it!" he told her earnestly. "And you'll be doing a real work for the generations that are to come, by constructive and not destructive logging of this forest of magnificent trees. Taking out a few of them, here and there, is good for the forest as a whole. The other trees are going to thrive all the more. I've always urged that, instead of sweeping the country free of all merchantable timber, and leaving only a desolate waste. I'm mighty glad to hear it. Depend upon me, I'll help all I can!"

She looked at him oddly, her head perked a little to one side, while she smiled.

"I wonder if you really will?" she asked. "You see, Nason, and Heenan, and the old crowd have gone. I'll need a superintendent—one who knows trees and who has a real feeling for them. It seemed to me that this would be an opportunity for you; a chance to look after the welfare of your precious forest of the giants. Will you take the job?"

Boldness came upon Jim Strafford then. He stepped forward and, forgetting that he was covered with smoke and soot, caught her in his arms; and, most amazing thing of all, he found that she did not struggle.

"I'll seal the bargain now!" he declared; and he did.

CITY QUAIL FARM

MOST men go to the forest wilderness for quail and pheasants, but Mr. William R. Russe, of Los Angeles, California, only has to go out in his own backyard to see hundreds of them.

In his game farm, which occupies a space of some thirty by sixty feet in area, Mr. Russe every year raises about a thousand birds. The pheasant pens measure six feet wide by nine feet deep, being eight feet high at the front, and six feet high at the back. The quail pens are only three feet wide, otherwise the dimensions are the same as for the pheasant pens. In the center is a weedy runway for the young quail.

This seems to be a case where the wilderness has turned the tables and is invading the city.

Treed

By Seth Ranger

Author of "A Chance on the Chip," etc.

THE smoke trailing lazily from the stone chimney was a welcome and familiar sight as I topped the ridge and looked into the valley. I was "soft" from a long session at the desk, and the stiff climb had winded me. Except that there was a little more moss on the log cabin, that the fruit trees were larger, and the clearing more extensive, Canaday's Place looked about the same as when I had first seen it, ten years before.

As I watched, a hound came slowly from the barn, paused briefly before the door, then with a deft movement of her paw, opened it, and entered. Almost immediately she emerged with a reproachful expression on her face. I smiled. That could mean but one thing. "Mother" Canaday had just scrubbed the cabin, and even old Bess, "Dad's" favorite hound, was not welcome.

There was something so inviting about that cabin standing in the sunshine with the odor of burning cedar trailing from the chimney that I forgot I was dead tired. I squirmed into the pack once more and dropped down the twisting trail. Bess was the first to realize that I had returned. She was a little older than when I had seen her the previous fall. And, of course, she was caring for a litter of pups.

Then Mother Canaday appeared. She was nearsighted and had the habit of thrusting her head forward until her vision cleared. "Heavens to Betsy!" she exclaimed, "I might have known you'd be here!" She wiped her fingers on her apron and extended a worn hand. "Land sake, I'm glad to see you! You're like a breath of fresh air."

She hadn't changed that I could see. She wore her hair combed straight back and tied in a knot. It was a little thinner, perhaps.

"Dad's ailin' lately," Mother Canaday told me, "and maybe you can cheer him up. I used to say if I got a set of teeth that'd fit nothing else would matter. I got my teeth, just got used to

'em, and then Dad starts actin' sort of pindlin' off and on." She held the door open. "Come in!"

"Wait until I wipe my feet. I noticed you chased Bess out and I suppose you have just scrubbed."

While I scraped the mud from my boots she stepped to a little ridge and called. "Dad! Oh, Dad! Come see who's come!"

I entered and unpacked. To offer money for a night's lodgings would have offended the old couple, and we boys who put up there on our hunting and fishing trips managed to "get even," as we called it, by bringing along more grub than we needed. We usually said something about its not being worth packing out and left it. As an old friend they would accept a box of cigars and a few pounds of candy from me. When fruit was in season, I brought it along. They had few luxuries. But, then, who wanted luxuries after tasting Mother Canaday's fried chicken and hot baking-powder biscuits?

I laid my gifts on the table and had just settled back when Dad Canaday entered. He had changed. His face had a haggard expression, and I sensed that his "ailing" was mental rather than physical. He walked with one shoulder sagging, as though his weight had shifted and he found it impossible to get back on an even keel. "Well, Dad," I exclaimed, "it's great to be up here again! Trout biting?"

"Don't know. I ain't been out yet!"

That looked bad. Usually he tested out the best pools with a few salmon eggs a day or two before the season opened. He cocked a critical eye at the fir tree standing a dozen rods from the door. The fresh green of this spring's growth stood out sharply against the darker green of the old foliage. "Lots of green on the firs this year; looks like the willows and devil-clubs would make it hard to fish the creek. Still, as I've said before, the best fishin' is the hardest to get to."

Mother Canaday interrupted with, "Hadn't you better kill a chicken on account——"

My visits invariably cost a life or two in the poultry ranks. I protested, feebly it is true, but protested, nevertheless. A moment later I gave thanks that my protest was ignored. Dad picked up a .22 rifle, stepped to the door, and deftly shot the heads off two spring chickens that were digging up his garden. Mother said something about there being time to mix up a batch of biscuits before lunch. She called it dinner.

When we were beyond earshot of the cabin, Dad picking one chicken and I the other, I asked: "Well, what's on your mind?"

"I'm wondering where in heck to move to?"

"What!" It was like some old cedar tree suggesting a journey to another valley.

"Then you ain't heard?"

"No! What?"

"There was an election. Remember there was a lot of talk about new blood? They claimed there was too many old fogies down at the State capitol doin' nothin' but drawin' their pay. New blood was needed. Braemer, who run for gov'ner, was a young man. It was mostly young men who got behind him. New blood! It was a great vote-catcher. They made a clean sweep. Young gov'ner; young house, and young senate; young men on the commissions. New game commission, all young men. The sportsmen have been kicking. They claim the game's getting less and less. They pay a dollar and a half for a county license; seven and a half for a license good anywhere in the State, and don't get a run for their money."

"That's true!"

"I know it is!" Then I saw Dad's

eyes blaze with anger. "But it ain't true I haven't kept the predatory animals out of my district. There's better hunting and fishing here than in any other part of the State. Why do you come here? You can go anywhere."

"I came here originally to hunt. Now it's to hunt, fish, and visit with you and Mother. They're not trying to let you out, are they?"

"I'm old blood, son," he answered, "I've been let out already. But Mother don't know. She only think's I'm ailing!"

"Who's been appointed in your place?"

"A half dozen are after the job, but they won't stick. It just looks good. You can't get young people to stay way out here alone. It'll mean they'll come and go, and the district will suffer. It takes a year to learn the country." He sighed. "Nobody's been appointed yet. I wrote in to Dean, he's the chairman of the game commission. He was decent about it; said there was nothing personal, but that a general shake-up, the infusion of new blood he called it, would be a good thing."

We returned to the house. "Don't let on to Mother," he whispered, as we neared the cabin. "It'll break her up. I ain't worryin' about myself. It's her I'm thinkin' of. First time in my life I was yellow. I'm afraid to tell her. Son," he looked at me gravely, "there're few trees that can be jerked up by the roots and planted elsewhere. Mother and me ain't that kind of trees. We'd wilt and die. We talked that over twenty years ago and picked a place nobody else would want or could get as long as we made good—we came here."

The next day I cut my fishing short, filled up on Mother's fried chicken and biscuits, and started for town with the promise to return a week later. I stopped in town just long enough to change into a business suit, then headed for the capitol. I knew Dean slightly. He must have sensed my mission.

"If it's about 'Old Man' Canaday, nothing doing," he said. "Five men have been in here already. I appreciate and understand their friendship, but we are after results. He can't cover the country as it should be covered. He's too old. I plan to put young men in there. There is no answer to this—there are more predatory animals in his district than there were ten years ago. That is saying a lot."

"Dad Canaday will have an answer for that," I protested. "I'm not basing my plea on friendship, nor even justice, but on results. You claim that is what you are after. I happen to know that most of the candidates for that job can't hold a candle to him as a cat hunter. Experience counts for something, or should. Any young man you send in there will stay until he tires of it, then clear out."

"I'm not convinced," Dean answered. He turned as if to indicate that the interview was ended.

"Do this, then, Dean. Take three days off. If you don't think you've earned a fishing trip, then call it a tour of inspection. But before you act do at least look over the best hunting country in our State."

He considered. "I'll do that!"

"May I take you in?" I asked. "I know the short cuts."

"Yes, if you wish. But that doesn't mean I shall change my mind. Efficiency comes first, you know. We want results. But——" He paused. "Steve Yodel rounded up a lot of votes in that country; Steve is a good hunter and trapper, and he's on the inside track."

"Steve Yodel, eh?" I kept back a retort that was on my lips. Steve Yodel had fresh venison last Christmas when the season was closed. This same Steve had sold a dozen elk teeth, to my knowledge, and I had on occasion

found the remains of elk with their teeth pulled and meat and heads otherwise untouched. Time enough to mention this. "When do you want to go in?"

"Suppose we start in two weeks?"

"Good, I'll be on hand!"

Another two weeks of swinging over the trails would harden me plenty, I thought, a week later as I climbed up the ridge. I did not stop to rest this time. Steve Yodel was two miles ahead of me, a forest-service man had said. I cut down most of the distance, but not quite enough. As I neared the cabin, I saw Steve enter.

Mother Canaday had not noticed me. She was chiefly concerned with the reason for Steve's unexpected call. Dad had once arrested Steve for trapping beaver out of season. He had managed to get off, somehow, but he remembered who arrested him. I heard his voice, thin, sharp, aggressive.

"How much of this stuff is your personal property, Mrs. Canaday?" he demanded.

"That is none of your business," she answered with spirit.

"It ain't, eh? Well, Canaday's been kicked out. They want new blood in this country; somebody who can get around. I've been elected. I want to know what I've got to bring in here."

I waited. Perhaps if this man was given enough rope he would hang himself. The silence was disturbing. Then Yodel's voice came again. "Well, don't start blubberin', this ain't your home. It belongs to the State. You two have been here plenty long. Give somebody else a chance."

Mother Canaday did not see me as she pushed past Yodel to the door. "Dad!" she called. "Oh—Dad!" Her voice almost broke, but pride was keeping the tears back now—pride and indignation. "Dad!"

"Comin' on the run!" he answered.

I stepped into the nearest shed. If the old man needed an ace at the right time I proposed to be it.

Mother gave Dad a searching look. "Is what he tells me true?" she demanded.

Dad knew what Yodel had told her without asking. "Yes, Mother."

"How long have you known it?"

"Goin' on two weeks."

"Two weeks! So that was what ailed you." She sighed and dropped into the nearest chair, then folded her hands in her lap. It was a pathetic little gesture of defeat. "What next—what next?"

Dad dropped his hand on her shoulder. "Don't worry. We'll make out, Mother."

"What I want to know is," Yodel said, "how much of this stuff do you own?" He indicated the furniture in the cabin.

I entered the room without knocking. "And what I want to know, Yodel, is why are you annoying these people before you've been appointed?" I exclaimed.

He scowled. "I'm as good as appointed right now. New blood is what they're after. I've got youth, and I've got the finest pack of young hounds on the country, and——"

"I happen to know otherwise. No one is as good as appointed until Canaday is removed. That hasn't happened yet. He's still on the job," I retorted.

Yodel withdrew.

"I only wish I could believe that," Dad muttered, "believe there was a chance."

"There's a slim chance," I answered. "I'm bringing Dean out to look over the situation."

Even that seemed cruel when I saw the light of hope come into their eyes. "Do you suppose?" Mother suggested, "he'd like some fried chicken and biscuits?"

"It would put him in a mellow mood," I answered.

The eagerness of the old couple to please Dean was pathetic. Mother's chicken was too crisp, and she burned her biscuits—something that never happened before. She swallowed hard and hurried into the bedroom and Dad followed. I heard something that sounded as if he were patting her on the back.

Later, he went fishing. For nearly a mile Dad had cleared the brush from the best holes, and Dean had the limit within three hours. On the way back Dad took a short cut that led through some game country. We saw a dozen deer and no end of pheasant and grouse.

"If it's politics, Mr. Dean," Dad said suddenly, "I'm willing to pack up and go. I haven't mixed in politics; but if it's making good on a tough job, I should stay."

"Tell me this, then, Canaday. Why does a census show an increase of bobcat, cougar, and coyotes in this district. This census was taken by sportsmen—not by any one after your job."

"The census showed an increase in game, too! And that's the reason. Game is scarce in other districts and predatory animals migrate here."

Dean said nothing for nearly a quarter of a mile. "I hadn't thought of that, Canaday. Confound it! If you were younger, and had a pack of young dogs——"

"I wouldn't want to be younger. I wouldn't have the experience I have now. As for young dogs—huh! I'll put old Bess up against any dog in the State! I'll go farther, Dean. I can see you don't want to let me out; that you're doing it because you think it's for the good of the game. I'll make it a sporting proposition. Bring out the best man you can find, with his dogs. I'll take Bess. The man who puts a cougar's pelt into your hand first wins the job. And I won't have a cougar staked out for the occasion either. You'll be sole judge! If I lose, I'll resign, and you won't be placed in the position of having fired an old employee."

Dean considered a moment. "Canaday, I'll just take you up on that," he said then.

Dad let us continue on the regular trail, but he dropped into the brush, saying that he wanted to look at a trap. I knew he was hurrying home to tell Mother he had a chance. That night the bisciuts were not burned and the chicken would melt in your mouth. Mother had curled her hair, too.

Dean and I slept in the spare room. "These people have given me a wonderful time," he said, "I wish I could do something for them."

"You have," I answered; "you've given them a chance."

"That was no favor. He hasn't a chance. That is what is hurting me. It's Mother's faith in Dad!" He was calling them Mother and Dad by this time. We all did. "And Dad's faith in himself," Dean continued; "it is the most beautiful thing I've seen in a long time. He actually believes he will win." He shook his head sadly. "Heck! But I can't let sentiment govern me in this business."

"Nobody wants you to, Dean," I answered, "least of all, Mother and Dad."

When he was beyond the influence of the old couple he shook off some of the personal feeling and became strictly business. He sent for Yodel, the best of the candidates for Dad's job, and put the proposition up to him. "Bring your pack and be there Thursday morning, ready for business," he concluded.

"I've had my hounds working on cats for six months now. They're wonders," said Yodel. "They're young and strong. I'm in great shape myself and can keep up with 'em. Mr. Dean, there's going to be a change in that country."

The day of the trial was ideal. We were up at dawn, and Mother fortified us with home-cured ham and fresh eggs. As an extra precaution she added a stack of hot cakes richly garnished with butter and wild honey. Yodel was there, of course, and was treated as an honored guest. He looked around the cabin in an appraising way that aroused my ire. But he did look fit and he was ready for the test. "Suppose," he suggested, "we take after the same cat. That'll be fairer."

I could not see it but remained silent. I was only a spectator.

"You see," he went on, "I want to be fair. Suppose, ten minutes after I start, my dogs tree a cat. And suppose it's the only cat within a mile. Canaday has no chance at all."

Dean looked at Dad. The old man smiled grimly. "Something in that," he agreed. Apparently he ignored the fact that in an out-and-out race the younger man could travel faster; the younger dogs tire the old one. "I might scare up a cat, too. In fact, I'm pretty sure I know where one is. Suppose, to save time, we put all the dogs on the same trail?"

"If that suits you," Dean agreed, though he was puzzled, "it is satisfactory to the rest of us."

A half hour later Old Bess had left her puppies behind for the exciting job of trailing a cat.

Yodel's baying pack picked up a bobcat scent almost immediately. He called them back. They were after bigger game to-day. Nothing less than a cougar.

Presently, Dad stopped and pointed. There in the dew was one of the largest cougar tracks I had ever seen. A creature of this size would kill a deer a week, at least, and its offspring would soon wipe the game from a valley.

With a bay of triumph Old Bess was off, Yodel's younger hounds at her heels. Something had alarmed the cat, and it had taken to the nearest thicket —a tangle of devil-clubs and skunk cabbage beyond which was a swamp. Yodel, conscious of his strength, smashed ahead, with the rest of us at his heels. Five minutes later we were knee-deep in the muck. I could see Yodel's eagerness to retain the lead. It was his opinion that the cat had gorged itself on a deer and would not run far—a half mile or so—before it took to a tree. He looked back frequently at the old-timer. Dad was close behind us. Twice I saw him take short cuts. I followed him.

A half hour later Dean stopped. "This is too much of a good thing for an office man."

Dad grinned. He was breathing heavily. "Too much for an old man like me," he admitted. "Come on!"

Apparently, he had quit the chase. He turned aside and climbed a ridge. At the top he rested a moment or two, then climbed a down tree for a better view.

"Tough," Dean whispered, "the old man's all in right now. Did you ever see any one faster than Yodel? He hit the high spots and ran over down timber as if it was a board walk." Abruptly he clutched my arm and pointed. "Hope the old man don't see that!" It was Bess. She had been left behind and was swinging across a clearing at a lazy pace.

Dad led off and we dropped into the next valley. In the distance we could hear the baying of Yodel's dogs. The chase must be getting hot. There was a note of excitement in the sound. My legs were like lead when we gained the next ridge; my breath coming in hot stabs. Dad seemed about the same, though he was breathing heavily. Another ridge would finish him. Again Dean pointed. Old Bess was hopelessly lost. She half crossed a clearing, then changed her mind, stood uncertainly, and then turned back.

The younger dogs' baying had died

in the distance. Dad lighted his pipe, smoked about half of it, then led off once more. I was glad he stuck to the ridge. So was Dean. Another hundred yards in the tangle of down timber and overgrown brush in the bottoms with the mire hanging to my feet would have killed me off. It takes several weeks of that sort of thing to harden a man.

Presently, Dad stopped again. But the rest was brief. I saw him leap to his feet and start down grade at a brisk pace. Straight into the brush he led us. We crawled at times, and at last emerged with hands and faces bleeding from numerous scratches. In the distance, I could hear the baying of the young hounds. Dad's pace quickened. Then he broke into a run. His breath was coming in sobs; his face almost gray from the effort. Suddenly I realized he was not out of the race; never had been. This was the finish—the finish when a man gives his all to cross the tape first.

A new sound broke in on the stumbling of feet and smashing of brush. The deep, throaty baying of Old Bess. She was off to the left, but Dad continued straight ahead. Bess changed her course, too. We came into a clearing and I saw her shoot in ahead of the younger dogs. They were nearly exhausted, tongues hanging, hot breath coming from their lungs with the swiftness of a steam-engine exhaust. Dad and Yodel broke through the timber at the same time. Yodel raised his rifle and fired suddenly. He was too exhausted to aim straight. On the limb of a lofty fir I saw the cougar. The great cat was lashing its tail in fury. I suppose it was spitting as a house cat spits, but the sound resembled a small explosion.

Dad lifted his rifle and fired. He was breathing hard, too, but he had delayed a moment. A convulsive muscular reaction as the bullet struck sent the cat into the air. It shot downward, twisting and snarling. As the tawny creature crashed into the brush beneath the tree, the young hounds leaped forward. One of them was knocked out, the red streaming before Canaday could interfere. Old Bess knew better than that. She was circling warily, eager, yet cautious.

The instant the cat's struggles ceased, Canaday drew his skinning knife, and a few minutes later he handed the pelt to Dean. "Does that win?" he inquired.

"I think it does," Dean answered.

"Then I'll hurry back and tell Mother!"

"Let's all go back and tell Mother," Dean suggested.

"Lucky break!" Yodel sneered. "Does he get the job on that? I tree the cat and he steps in and bags it!"

"That was not a break," Dean answered, "that was experience, I am sure. Dad's movements seemed without purpose. At times, Old Bess seemed lost; but they were both there at the finish. I don't know how it was done, but it wasn't chance."

We hurried back to the cabin. I heard Mother singing as though she hadn't a care in the world. We were hungry. More biscuits and fried chicken—chicken fried perfectly.

"We won, Mother!" Dad announced.

"You didn't expect to lose, did you?" she inquired.

"No, but I was afraid Yodel might be lucky. He worked hard, but he didn't have the experience. As soon as we struck the swamp, I could see by the tracks that that cat wasn't sluggish. It hadn't eaten and would take the usual direction to shake off the hounds. I cut back and so did Bess. She kept down wind and got the scent in the air. After that, it was easy. I watched her until she went into that big stand of fir. Then I watched the treetops. Pretty soon one of 'em began shaking and I knew the cat was treed.

Never saw Bess work faster. She always works fast when she has to get back to her pups."

"Finest thing I ever saw," Dean admitted. "She didn't make one mistake."

"When you're as old as we are and the youngsters are reaching for your place, you can't make mistakes," Canaday answered.

At that moment Old Bess appeared at the door. Apparently she had fed her pups. With a deft movement she opened the door and looked in. Her eyes moved from the freshly scrubbed floor to Mother. She hesitated; then, knowing well she was breaking a rule, she entered, leaving a muddy trail the length of the room. Mother Canaday started swiftly for the door where she kept the broom. But when she returned she carried the mop.

In Next Week's Issue of

WESTERN STORY MAGAZINE

SPUDS

By Seth Ranger

The man rode furiously, nursing his revenge. Victory was almost within his grasp.

TURNED RIGHT

By Guthrie Brown

"There'll never be another sheriff like him—that's sure." And the story is a better short "Western" than you'll read anywhere.

"TIMBER-R-R!"

By Frank Richardson Pierce

When there's no time for fear a man may well forget to be afraid—but it doesn't always follow.

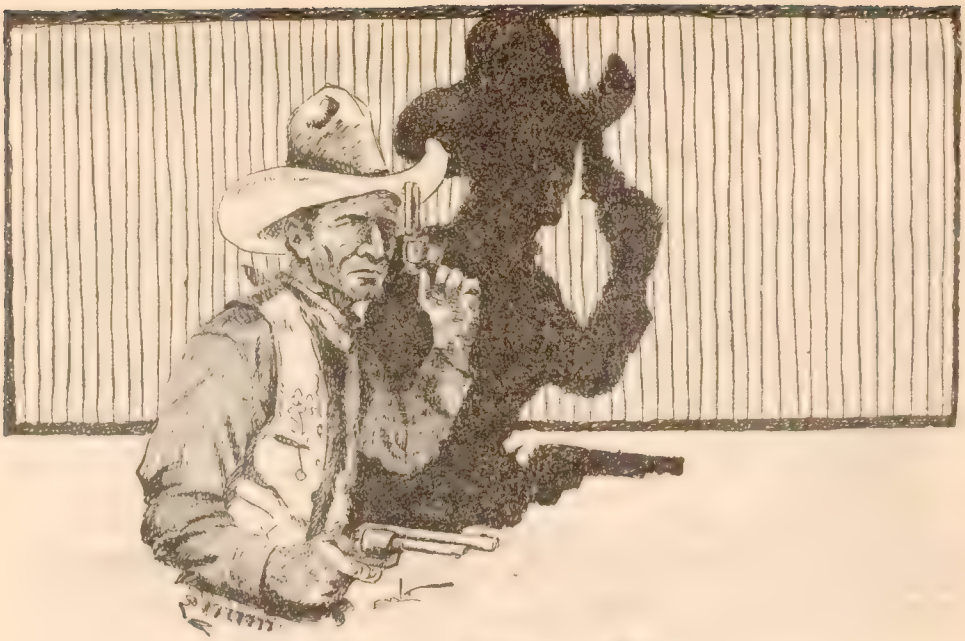
ALSO FEATURES BY

John Frederick Jackson Gregory

George Cory Franklin And Others

15c a Copy

At All News Stands



Feather Yore Nest

By C. Wiles Hallock

GERONIMO JESSE, the "Timber-line Terror,"
Stuck up a stage on the Red Mountain Trail;
Waylaid the rig whar' the road bank is narrer—
Shot up the scen'ry—vamosed with the mail.
Knowed that a pay roll was bein' expected—
Wages for rangers—up Telluride way;
Sure by the bulk o' the sack he'd collected,
Same was the cash for them range-riders' pay.

Geronimo Jesse, the Timber-line Terror,
Had him a hideaway—no one knowed whar'—
Safe in the mountains, an' swift as an arrer,
Highball, his hoss, took Geronimo thar'.
Gleeful an' gloatin' to look at his plunder,
Quick he ripped open the mail sack an' gazed
Plumb flabbergasted, plumb speechless with wonder—
Stared at a bundle o' feathers—amazed!

Wasn't no sign of a pay roll around thar'—
Only one letter—a neat folded note—
Pawin' through all o' them feathers he found thar'—
These is the words which as follers was wrote:
"Geronimo Jesse, the Timber-line Terror:
Feather yore nest while I laff up my sleeve!
This ain't the haul you was cravin'? My error!
Yores vurry honestly—Stage-driver Steve."

Dogs That Didn't Bark

By D. C. Hubbard

MANY years ago, when the Indian roamed North America at large, there was a type of dog which, according to report, had one property and lacked another commonly associated with dogs. These canines, as we are led to believe they really were, never barked, and wore a long, thick coat which was sheared and used much as we now use wool from sheep.

Captain Vancouver wrote as follows of these strange dogs which he encountered in 1792, at Port Orchard, on Puget Sound:

"The dogs belonging to this tribe of Indians—meaning those at Port Orchard—were numerous, and much resembled those of Pomerania, though in general somewhat larger. They were all shorn as close to the skin as sheep are in England; and so compact were their fleeces, that large portions could be lifted up by a corner without causing any separation. They were composed of a mixture of a coarse kind of wool, with very fine long hair, capable of being spun into yarn. This gave me reason to believe that their—the Indians'—woolen clothing might in part be composed of this material mixed with a finer kind of wool from some other animal, as their garments were all too fine to be manufactured from the coarse coating of the dog alone. The abundance of these blankets among the few people we met with indicates the animal from whence the raw material is procured to be very common in this neighborhood; but as they have no one domesticated except the dog, their supply of wool for their clothing can only be obtained by hunting the wild creature that produces it, of which we could not obtain the least information."

Other reports have come down to us regarding these most unusual dogs which have since become extinct, and in more than one account they are spoken of as being "driven in herds and shorn as close as sheep." The dogs are said to have been thoroughly domesticated and not savage. Their ears were pointed and stood upright. Most of the writers on this subject agree that the dogs were pure white, although in one instance it is said that they were white, brown, and black.

The blankets made by the Indians—only a few are still extant—often had black designs in them, for the Indians were fond of weaving motifs into all of their handiwork. But since dyes were known and used by the red men at that time, it is likely that the accounts stating the dogs to be pure white are the most credible. It is also possible that the writer who wrote of seeing brown and black dogs as well as white viewed some that had been crossed with other breeds. These Indians realized the value of the wool-bearing dogs and kept flocks of them segregated upon small islands in order to keep the strain pure.

Again we have a hint that the island dogs did not take to the water, or they could not have been so easily kept from the mainland. Because the Eskimo husky has this trait, some believe that the two kinds of dogs may have been related.

In making blankets and garments from the long dog's-wool, the Indians added duck's down, wool taken from the mountain goat, or milk-weed fiber. The methods entailed in getting the wool ready for use were crude and quite different from the way sheep's wool is prepared to-day.

Like the dog wool, sheep's wool, however white and snowy it appears when upon the animal, is in reality very dirty and matted with foreign obstacles. In our great woolen mills it is pulled apart with coarse tines, washed, combed, first with widely spaced forks, then with finer and finer ones until the wool is separated into hairlike strands. These strands are then twisted and lengthened into countless yards of thread, which is later woven into cloth.

The Indians took a ball of diatomaceous earth, rolled it into a ball, heated it, and when it was reduced to a powder mixed it with the dog wool. Then the wool was spread out, moistened, and beaten with a stick, which removed all grease from the wool. The Indian women took the wool at this stage and wove it into yarn by hand and then made their blankets. In the British Museum are a few of these remarkable blankets and they are the only known ones in existence, although it is possible that some of the Indian tribes have had several of them handed down from generation to generation and held them with sacred pride, out of the vision of the avid collector.

A BEAR WAR BREAKS OUT

THE citizens of Kodiak, Alaska, last summer petitioned the department of agriculture to permit them to take up arms against the bands of bad brown bears who had become a menace to their life and property. The same situation confronted the pioneers, who used their long rifles without thinking twice about it and shot down the bears. It seems an inevitable battle when northern frontiers are extended.

The Kodiak bears are protected in the summer months, and the men of Kodiak asked to have this protection removed, asserting that the bears are the most dangerous and damaging of wild animals. A compromise has been effected by the suggestion of the biological survey that resident farmers and ranchmen of the islands be permitted to kill the bears wherever they are actually threatening the persons or live stock of dwellers in the islands. A fiery reception on their next visit may serve to show the unwelcome guests that they are not to have things all their own way.

SPEEDING WITH A GOLD RUSH

SHARP contrasts in methods of transportation are the order of the day in the vicinity of Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, where a new gold rush has set the city agog. The city, in fact, has become the base for a gold rush. And, from it, parties continually dash forth to seek their precious yellow metal in the region of Rottestone Lake, Lac la Ronge, and Reindeer Lake.

For this exciting trek, old-fashioned methods of conveyance are sometimes utilized. Freight, for instance, is moved by tractors and horses. Contrasted with these, however, is the fact that the Pacific Railway is constructing a branch line to a point near Lac la Ronge. The greatest innovation in sour-dough travel, however, is the fact that planes to carry the prospectors into the gold fields are becoming more and more popular. One company has established a flying base at Prince Albert, while two other companies are planning to inaugurate a plane service.

Raised On Trouble

By George Cory Franklin

Author of "Road's Clear," etc.

SLIPPING and sliding, tipping so that one moment a bed roll was in danger of rolling into the turgid waters of Crooked Creek, and the next nearly jarring "Baldy's" back teeth loose, the Broken Heart chuck wagon made its wabbly way down Little Squaw Hill, to stop irrevocably and immovably, stuck in the mud, beside the stream. Baldy Powers pushed his floppy old Stetson back with rope-burned fingers and looked at the mud-coated team with utter disgust.

It was seven miles yet to Antelope Springs where the Broken Heart beef herd was to be thrown off the trail. Baldy communed with himself in language unprintable. The four mules waggled their long ears as if congratulating themselves that for the moment Baldy's wrath was not directed toward them. The wagon sank slowly to the hubs in soft mud. Baldy pulled a sulphur-blackened silver watch from the pocket of his overalls and held it up; the hands indicated three o'clock. A large drop of water found its way through a hole in his old hat, trickled down his forehead, ran off his eaglelike nose, and splashed on the face of the watch.

"Gwan and rain!" he roared. "What difference does it make to you that the Broken Heart spread won't have supper and will have to sit up all night wolfin' it around a sputterin', cracklin' fire?"

Baldy stopped his tirade to look in amazement at an object who appeared to be even more miserable than himself, a boy in his late teens who forked a big, rawboned horse; the old center-fire saddle pitched so far forward that the rawhide-covered horn was above

the short, stiff hairs of the collar marks in front of the high withers.

"Stuck?" queried the boy.

No more unfortunate words could have been spoken to Baldy at that moment. "Stuck!" he reiterated. "Stuck! Oh, no, I ain't stuck! I'm just stayin' here to enjoy the wonderful Colorado sunshine and listen to the birds sing. My outfit is waitin' for me seven miles down the river, and while I'm enjoyin' myself here baskin' in the glorious weather, them cowboys that have worked all day on soapy hills and through brush that has all but tore their hearts out, can comfort themselves with good rain water and chew sticks for supper."

The boy climbed stiffly down from the big horse and walked over to peer under the wagon. In spite of his bedraggled appearance and evident poverty, his eyes shone brightly with the interest youth finds in investigating calamity. "Say," he called hopefully, "I believe I could get a pole under the hub of this wheel and pry it up so that you could pull it out. It's square chock up against a boulder. You couldn't pull this wagon with forty yoke of bulls the way it is now."

Baldy wrapped the reins around the brake and climbed down beside the boy. He noticed how the wet shirt clung to the lad's thin, wiry arms. "Ain't you cold?" he asked.

"Sorta, but I'd get warm helpin' you. Wait a minute." He pulled the old horse around to point toward an aspen thicket a short distance up the hill and, climbing on, he kicked simultaneously with each step taken by the slowly moving animal.

"Guess he's right at that," Baldy decided. "He'll keep warm workin' his passage on that old rack of bones."

The boy was back in a few minutes dragging a long aspen pole by means of a rope dallied around the horn of his wreck of a saddle. When the pole had been placed against the hub and over another chunk which the boy brought, they found that their combined weight on the lever would lift the wheel clear of the rock, but the weight of the boy's body was not sufficient to hold it there.

"Suppose you could drive 'em out of here while I hold the wheel up?" Baldy asked.

"Sure," boasted the boy cheerily.

Baldy watched him approvingly as the lad climbed up to the high seat and slipped the four reins skillfully between the fingers of his left hand. Like everything else, handling four reins expertly comes only after long practice, and no novice can for an instant deceive one who knows the art. Baldy grinned, muttering: "The little rascal handles them ribbons like most kids would handle a fork."

When the boy had pulled the leaders as far to the right as they could go, he adjusted the reins exactly the way he wanted them and took Baldy's four-horse whip from the leather loop on the back of the seat, swinging it to free the lash from the long-ferruled stock. "Ready?" he asked cheerfully.

"Uh, huh," answered Baldy.

The long lash circled back over the wagon, and cracked around the body of the off leader as a sharp pull swung the team to the left. The six-inch popper snapped back under the belly of the rear mule and, with the same motion, reached the rump of the near leader. The lightninglike motion ended by a cut on the one mule that had not yet been hit. It was the most skillful bit of handling of a whip that Baldy had ever seen. Never had those mules pulled as they did when they swung back toward the road and leaned against the creaking collars. The boy's body swayed gracefully as the high seat rocked like a boat in a heavy sea, and the mules dragged the wagon out onto solid ground.

Baldy led the boy's horse after the wagon. "If you ain't a driver, you'll

do till one comes along," he praised. "Where do you live?"

The boy shook his head, but did not reply.

"Sho, now," said the kind-hearted old teamster, "ain't you got folks?"

A shake of the floppy old hat sent a shower of water from above the scraggly, tow-colored head. "Dead." The word was spoken with a finality that told a whole volume of tragedy, but the next instant the cheery voice proved that this boy was no candidate for sympathy and was not going to be pitied. "I'm a top hand at any kind of ranch work. As soon as I can get a job, I'll begin buyin' me an outfit, and when I get goin' a little, I'll be all right. I've found that life is a good deal like gettin' stuck in the mud. Gettin' sore don't help. Cussin' won't make a mule pull; and the rain can't drown a grin."

"Well, I'll be danged!" ejaculated Baldy. "What's your name?"

"My name is Ben Larkin, but most everybody calls me 'Ginger' 'cause they think I have a way of keepin' folks pepped up, even when things don't look so good."

Baldy had already experienced the effect of Ginger's philosophy. "I don't know of an outfit on the river that needs your style of handlin' things worse than does the Broken Heart. Bill Daly, my boss, pays some attention to what I say; maybe he'll give you a job. Anyway, you've earned your supper and a chance to share my bed roll to-night. If we don't get stuck again we'll make it to the springs in time to get supper ready for the boys."

"Look," cried the boy, pointing to the west, "the sun is bustin' through already."

Bill Daly had been watching anxiously for his chuck wagon since noon. He would have gone back to see what was delaying Baldy, or would have sent some one, but the trail herd was cranky and he was short-handed, anyway. The outlook was even more gloomy to Daly than it had been to Baldy in those sordid, rain-soaked minutes before Ginger had appeared beside the stalled wagon. The long years since the war had been discouraging to the cattlemen. Many of them had been sold out. Daly wondered sometimes if he wouldn't have been better off if he had let the bank take the ranch and cattle for what he owed. Bill was yet a young man, a little short of thirty-five. He could get a job riding. Forty a month and prunes would be better than to have to go in to Monte every three months and rake and scrape to pay the interest money and stand off the merchants for grub.

The faces of the cowboys who rode for him were becoming set in a perpetual scowl. Bill did not blame them. He'd have a grouch, too, if he hadn't been paid for a year, and had to wear patched boots and ragged overalls, and ride in such weather as this without a slicker. This herd he was trailing to market would help a lot if he could get a good price, but it did not seem possible that he could get more than nine dollars a hundred for them. "Slim" Taggard of the Bar T had sold as good a herd as this for eight and a half. If Daly didn't get more than that, he wouldn't have anything left for the men after the bank and the grub bill were paid.

All day, as the rain had drizzled down over the hills, these gloomy thoughts had gripped Daly. About four o'clock he rode to a knoll beside the road and looked back. The first gleam of comfort he had felt that day came to him as he saw his chuck wagon coming along the road. At least, the men would have their bed rolls that night, and what poor food Baldy would be able to shake together for them from his meagerly stocked mess-box.

Daly wondered at the swift approach

of the team. What had got into Baldy? He had been as discouraged as any of the men that morning. His movements as he had worked around the camp fire after breakfast showed all too plainly that he already had this deal figured out just as Daly had been reasoning that day. But now—something had happened to make Baldy drive like that. The chuck wagon came on rapidly, the mules traveling at a fast walk, breaking into a shuffling trot on the down slopes. Their heads were up, their ears forward and back, changing every second. Baldy sat on the left side of the wagon, and on the right was a slender-looking youth who drove the four mules as proudly, and with as much attention to detail, as if they were a fancy-stepping team of thoroughbreds. The reins were taut, causing the mules' heads to be up, and their necks almost arched. The whip stock, grasped firmly in the hand which held the off reins, lay across them, ready for instant use. The toe of the driver's muddy boot was hooked under the brake staff as his right leg swung freely over the end of the high seat.

"Hello, boss," called Baldy cheerily. "I've picked me up a driver. That means I can fork a horse and help with the trail herd to-morrow."

Daly nodded, but his approval lacked enthusiasm. He was wondering what the other Broken Heart riders would think of his hiring more men when he was unable to pay those he already had. "Camp in that little *rincón* beyond the spring," he directed. "We'll throw this trail herd onto bed ground and be in for supper by the time it's ready."

Baldy jerked his head with a motion Daly had not seen since the hard times had hit the cow country. It hinted of the old spirit of carefree daring that had once possessed the Broken Heart spread, an attitude of readiness to face whatever the day might hold, and fight out difficulties on trouble's own ground. Across the valley, beyond the mud-bespattered chuck wagon, the clouds had parted, and a ray of brilliant sunlight seemed to be focused on the ragged driver. "Yeah, boys," the latter commanded, and the team stepped off together.

Daly watched. "I don't know where Baldy picked him up, but he's got what this outfit ain't had for a long time—some pep. I certainly wish it would be catchin'."

Tired riders pulled their rain-soaked outfits from reeking horses and dumped the smelly saddle blankets near a fire that roared at the edge of the trees. They looked at Baldy wonderingly as they heard him singing Badger Clark's poem, "Ridin'," to a tune of his own improvisation.

"When my feet is in the stirrups,
And my hawse is on the bust,
With his hoofs a-flashin' lightnin'
From a cloud of golden dust,
And the bawlin' of the cattle
Is a-comin' down the wind,
Then a finer life than ridin'
Would be mighty hard to find."

Then, as Baldy started on the chorus, the boy, a queer, ragged caricature of a range rider, grabbed a battered dish pan and beating time with a big, iron spoon, he joined in:

"Just a-ridin', a-ridin'—
Splittin' long cracks through the air,
Stirrin' up a baby cyclone,
Rippin' up the prickly pear
As I'm ridin'."

With the last word of the chorus, Ginger sprang away from the pile of dishes he had been stacking and led out in a circle. The same dynamic force with which he had been able to inspire the mules took hold of the men. "Come on, you riders, sing!" commanded the boy.

Baldy fell in behind Ginger, lifting his bowed legs high to keep time to the *dong, dong, dong* of Ginger's drum. The men got the spirit, kicked old man

Gloom in the jaw, and marched in a circle while they roared the last verse:

"When my earthly trail is ended,
And my final bacon curled,
And the last great round-up's finished
At the home ranch of the world,
I don't want no harps nor halos,
Robes nor other dressed-up things—
Let me ride the starry ranges
On a pinto hawse with wings!"

And when the first words of the chorus rang out, even Daly himself stepped out behind the others and howled it in defiance off toward the clouds which had seemed to be the symbols of the depression which had hung over the ranges for ten long, weary years.

When the trail herd strung out next morning, Baldy rode on the drag, while Daly puttered around camp waiting for an opportunity to talk to the waif who had seemingly been born of the mud flats. The clouds still hung in long, threatening reefs on either side of the valley, but rain had ceased to fall.

"You've sure made things a lot different around here," Daly told Ginger.

"What's the matter, boss?" asked the boy. "You fellers was all like a bunch of old hens campin' under a leaky wagon box. I sure don't see why, with a bunch of steers like you've got and the market raisin' every minute. Why, I shouldn't be surprised if you got ten dollars a hundred for them dogies."

Daly had wanted for months to talk to some one, to put into words his fears, and to say out loud why he had held on so doggedly to what every one prophesied was a forlorn hope.

"You ain't never seen my ranch," he began. "There's three miles of level meadow, with a clear mountain stream windin' down through it. The forests come down to the edge of the valley, and up the cross gulches the trails lead to a summer range for thousands of cattle. I've got comfortable cabins and bully good sheds and stables. I can cut hay enough to feed every hoof I've got from October to May, if need be, and it's fear of losin' all this that pretty near busts me and makes us all like you saw us last night."

For half an hour the cattleman loosed the pent-up floods of his worries to the boy, who listened sympathetically. Finally, after Daly had recounted the urgency of his debts and the hopelessness of saving his ranch, Ginger took the floor.

"I'm sure glad I come here when I did," he declared. "What you need is the same thing Baldy needed yesterday, a boost over a tough place and a lot of buckskin poppin' over the back of trouble. I ain't very old, but I've found out that the biggest bluffer on earth is worry, and the best medicine for discouragement is to give it a swat between the eyes. Take the wrinkles out of the stomachs of these riders of yours, feed 'em well, and they'll forget that they ain't been paid. Don't stop at just enough. Push the limit, and you'll find that bad luck will begin to duck from you when it sees you've gone on the prod. Give me the money you've been savin' to pay your feed bill at the stockyards, and I'll guarantee to hog tie this proddy maverick Discouragement before we land in Monte."

"I got your idea last night," Daly agreed. "That's why I stayed back this mornin' to talk to you. There's a little cow town off here about three miles." He gave the boy a roll of bills. "I'm playin' my stack on you to win. Get whatever you want."

Ten minutes later, Ginger drove away and Daly rode to catch up with the herd. Baldy neck-reined his horse to ride beside his employer. "Did you ever see anybody like him?" he asked.

"He's like we all was once," said Daly. "I guess it's the spirit of youth."

"Yeah," agreed Baldy, "that and the confidence that comes from a heap of sabe. That boy knows cows as well

as he knows men and how to pull wagons out of the mud. He's been raised on trouble till he ain't afraid to pull its tail."

"Well, just enthusiasm ain't goin' to get me by and save the Broken Heart," argued Daly; "but there's no doubt he's right about one thing, and that is that a good supper will help the boys a lot and add a few miles to our drive to-day. I had intended to camp at the Gap, but I want you to ride ahead and tell every man that we're goin' to have a big feed at Riverside as soon as we get there. Then you cut across and meet the chuck wagon, go on with the boy, and cook up a meal that will make the boys talk about it a year from now. We've been nursin' a grouch for a long time. Now we'll see what Ginger's idea can do."

The spirit spread even to the steers, and as the men on the point pushed the leaders to a faster gait, a ripple seemed to run back along the column to the drag where Daly rode. His horse pricked up his ears and broke into a jog trot as he worked back and forth behind the laggards.

The clouds hung low all day, but, somehow, the men did not mind them so much. When the word was passed around that a big feed was coming that night, they put more snap into their work, so that the extra miles were covered before dark and the herd turned loose to graze an hour or two before being bedded down for the night.

Ginger had stocked his wagon abundantly for the rest of the drive into Monte, and when the men gathered eagerly around the chuck wagon their noses wrinkled like a lot of hungry rabbits as they smelled the pork chops sizzling in the two big dripping pans Ginger had added to their mess outfit. "'Taint a bit of use to buy expensive grub and then blunt the edge of it by servin' it cold," he explained to Baldy. "Them two pans only cost a dollar apiece, and they'll do more to turn this trick than a promise of a raise in wages would do."

Baldy was busy turning out pans of biscuits. There was a fat stew bubbling on the coals, and a big pile of doughnuts, sugar-covered and crisp, to tempt the hungry men.

"Lawsy me," said "Shorty" Calhoun, "I've et so much I can't get up."

"Huh," jeered Ginger, "you ain't seen nuthin' yet. Wait till you get breakfast in the mornin', with buckwheat cakes and sausage. I tell you, prosperity is just oozin' out all over these hills. The cow business is goin' to boom."

Men rolled their smokes and went out to the herd almost eagerly, and those whose turn to guard the cattle would come later sat about a roaring fire talking contentedly.

"Ginger's medicine is workin'," Daly told Baldy. "The riders feel better already. We're goin' another extra five miles to-morrow, almost a half a day's drive we've gained in two days."

The herd was turned loose to feed along the trail at daylight, and two hours later, just as the outfit wagon was ready to start, a smart buckboard swung off the road, and a short-faced man with a long, blue-tipped nose dismounted and beckoned to Daly.

"Hang the luck!" complained Baldy. "Just as the boss begins to look a mite less worried, old Beesly has to come foggin' in."

"Who's the bad news in the buckboard?" asked Ginger.

"He's the banker from Monte," Baldy explained. "He holds a mortgage on these cows, and I suppose he's goin' to insist that he shall have the say as to what commission house shall handle 'em. If he makes the boss turn 'em over to Crawford & Bailey, they'll take whatever profit there might be above what Daly owes the bank, and split it with Beesly. They're so crooked neither of 'em could sleep in a roundhouse."

Ginger was leading Barney, his big, rawboned horse, past Beesly, as the meaning of Baldy's words flashed on him. Suddenly the big horse began to rear. "Whoa! Whoa!" yelled Ginger, swinging onto the reins as if trying his best to stop the gigantic pile of bones. Baldy looked on in amazement as Ginger clung to the horse, yelling louder every second. This was in strange contrast to the boy's usually quiet manner with the stock. The banker was swearing loudly. "Get that infernal beast away from here!" he stormed.

"I'm tryin' to," answered Ginger, apparently pulling on the reins; but to men who understood, as did Baldy and Daly, there was no doubt but that the horse was doing exactly what he was being forced to do by the boy.

The paper in Beesly's hand had been knocked to the ground. Daly held a fountain pen. He had been in the very act of signing the paper when the big horse had reared. Ginger was struggling with Barney, but Baldy noticed that one of Ginger's boots had been set on the paper, and the order of sale which the banker had been so anxious to have Daly sign was being twisted and torn into unrecognizable pulp. Then, as quietly as if he had never been guilty of an impropriety in his life, Barney straightened up and walked with dignity toward the chuck wagon.

The banker was furious. He tried to piece together the hopelessly torn order. Ginger brushed the mud off first one side and then the other as if he were terribly embarrassed that his horse should have caused so much annoyance.

"Now I'll have to make a trip clear back up here." Beesly for once forgot himself and made a fatal blunder.

"Why should you go to all that trouble?" inquired Daly. "If I tell you to tell Crawford & Bailey to sell four hundred head of steers for me at the market, to be delivered day after tomorrow, that ought to be enough."

"But don't you see?" argued the banker. "I want to be sure that you get all you can for your cattle. If you had signed that order for them to sell these cattle at nine dollars a hundred and they'd accepted it, they'd be forced to pay you that much, no matter how much the market dropped."

Daly began to be suspicious. "Oh!" he ejaculated. "Thank you, but I guess I'll not bother you to come back with another order."

"I tell you what I'll do," persisted Beesly. "I'll buy your herd right now. We'll figure up what you owe the bank, lump off these cattle at, say, a thousand pounds, and I'll give you credit for the difference."

For a moment, the temptation was great. Daly saw that by merely a nod of his head, he might lift the mortgage on his place; but at nine dollars a hundred, and guessing the steers at a thousand pounds, he would have little left with which to pay his other debts and his men. In that moment he glanced at Ginger. The boy was standing by the buckboard looking straight at him, his face actually showing white under the tan. Something stirred within Daly. He turned to look at Beesly. The banker's eyes showed great anxiety. For some reason he was in a great hurry to buy up these cattle, and there was no question but that Ginger was terribly afraid that Daly would deal with him.

Was it possible that the boy had maneuvered the big horse on purpose to interrupt this deal and keep Daly from signing that order? The cattleman was becoming more suspicious every moment. "No, I guess I'll wait until I get to market before I sell 'em," he said. "They'll weigh out better than a thousand pounds a head."

The banker was losing patience. He failed to understand what had come over Daly since the incident of the horse. He had seemed willing enough before to

contract the cattle at nine dollars, had been on the point of signing the order for that amount, and now he was refusing a cash offer. The banker saw a profitable deal sleeping through his finers. He was afraid if he raised the price too much he would scare Daly off. He thought of another way, a much more intricate plan, but one that would cause Daly to accept what he offered, and he decided right then that it would be fifty cents a hundred less, to pay him for the extra trouble. He climbed back into the buckboard, turned, and sent the horse racing down the road toward Monte.

Ginger stood ten feet away, his face a strange mixture of relief and boyish contrition. "I'm awful sorry, boss," he began. "Probably you'll think I'm nuthin' but a meddler, but I just had to keep you from signin' that contract."

Daly smiled. "I thought you was makin' that horse extra useful," he chuckled. "Why did you do it?"

Ginger grinned. "I hinted at what I'd found out in this little cow town yesterday when I said this country was goin' to be prosperous, and cows was goin' to boom," Ginger explained. "I thought you'd ask me what I meant, if you wanted to know, and when you didn't say anything I thought, of course, you was wise to what's happened; but when I heard this banker's name and found out he was the same man I'd heard a couple of old cattlemen talkin' about yesterday while I was buyin' grub, I just grabbed the first thing that offered to bust up this game, and that happened to be old Barney."

"What do you mean?" asked Daly. "What's happened?"

"Why, the cattle market has gone higher than a cat's back. Them men I overheard was kickin' themselves because they'd contracted their steers at nine dollars, and they said they knew that a man by the name of Beesly was backin' Crawford & Bailey, the firm that has contracted with a big commission house in Denver to furnish 'em a thousand head at nine dollars. They'd only been able to get hold of about six hundred head before the cow men got suspicious. Your herd would just fix 'em so's they wouldn't lose any money on the deal."

Daly was thinking more rapidly than he had thought for a long time. He held out one hand to Ginger. "Boy, you're a peach; but I know what Beesly will try to do now just as well as if I was with him. He'll go to my creditors in Monte and either buy up their accounts against me or force some of them to run an attachment against my cattle. He can't use his own notes because they've been extended till next Saturday. That's why I was tryin' to push through and sell as soon as I could. Beesly owns Clay Rawlins, the sheriff. He's elected him for three terms back. If Rawlins got the steers in his possession he'd put 'em in a pasture somewhere, and hold 'em till Beesly told him to let 'em go. They'd force me to sell at their own price."

"Don't this sheriff have to get a service on you?" broke in Ginger.

"Yes, or on the man who is my agent."

"Suppose you ain't got no agent?" persisted Ginger. "Suppose you disappear and there ain't any foreman left in charge, and the sheriff should come, what could he do?"

"By thunder, Ginger, I believe it will work," exclaimed Daly. "Remember, I'm not puttin' you in charge. I'm trustin' you, however, to use your judgment. You've got the oldest head I ever saw on young shoulders. You won't see me again, nor know where I am, until you put these steers into the yards at Monte. To-day is Wednesday. You'll make it to the Wolf Creek flats to-night easy. To-morrow you should make the Seven Mile Plaza, which is only eight miles out of Monte. With no bad luck

you'd ought to be in the stockyards by Friday noon—evening, at the outside. That'll give me time to sell and weigh out and get the money into the bank by Saturday noon."

Baldy had stood by, listening to the conversation. So far he had not spoken. A gnarled hand went under the lining of his old hat to rub thoughtfully the fringe of hair above his right ear. "I was just thinkin', boss," he suggested, "that Beesly might go so far as to even throw in with the other commission houses in Monte. If the market is boomin' like Ginger says, maybe a outside firm might be willin' to send a man to buy straight from you. They'd make money on that sort of a deal, and sure it would be a good thing for this cattle country to have the stockmen learn that this firm of Crawford & Bailey ain't the whole thing, when it comes to marketin' steers."

Daly's lips were set in a straight, firm line. "I'd thought of that, Baldy. I think you two understand this play as well as anybody needs to. I'm awake and backin' you. Either we'll be ridin' back this road next week free men, or we'll all be lookin' for jobs."

Daly did not even see the herd again that morning. He crossed the river and rode into the hills in the direction of an old Indian trail. Baldy rode after the herd, and Ginger climbed to his place on the high seat of the chuck wagon. The herd strung out contentedly under a sky of deepest blue. Birds sang in the willows along the Rio Grande, rejoicing in the sun and the abundance of food that the rain had brought forth for their use.

About five o'clock, as the steers wound their way down the lane which led across Wolf Creek Valley to the open range beyond, a buckboard slowed up beside the road, and Clay Rawlins motioned imperatively to "Shorty" Calhoun.

Shorty rode over and threw one fat leg over the neck of his pony. "Hello, sheriff, ain't you sorta off your reservation?" he joked.

Rawlins disregarded Shorty's good-natured remark. "Where's Daly?" he demanded.

"I don't know," Shorty answered truthfully. "I ain't seen him since breakfast."

The steers crowding through the narrow lane made it impossible for Rawlins to go on. He was forced to wait until the long, slow-moving herd came out into the open country. Baldy alone was bringing up the drag. The chuck wagon was a hundred yards back. Rawlins waited until the wagon came up. Perhaps Daly was riding in the wagon. Owners sometimes did. The ragged, innocent-looking driver didn't know where Mr. Daly was, hadn't seen him since breakfast.

Rawlins swore heatedly and swung around to catch up with Baldy, who at that moment saw something of interest up toward the swing, and loped away over the mesa, leaving the angry sheriff to poke along in the dust kicked up by the hoofs. The storm had not been nearly so heavy here, and the heat of the sun since early morning had dried out this soil, so that a cloud of alkali dust hung over the drag. Rawlins drove slowly, stopping every few yards to wait for Baldy to come back, but Baldy was busy on the column. He grinned and crossed over to the opposite side when he saw the sheriff coming toward him over the rough ground of the mesa.

The chuck wagon rattled by and hurried forward to find a place to camp for the night. Again, Rawlins was compelled to stop and wait for the herd to pass him. Finally, as the steers were thrown off the road exactly where Daly had prophesied they would be that evening, Rawlins confronted Baldy, who appeared surprised to see him. "Why,

hello, sheriff," said Baldy, "I was wonderin' who was here."

"Where's Daly?" broke in the officer impatiently.

"Haven't seen him all day," Baldy replied. "Him and Beesly was visitin' near camp this morin', and I haven't noticed the boss since. Maybe he went to Monte with that banker."

"Didn't he leave anybody in charge?" demanded Rawlins. "Who's his foreman?"

"We ain't never had no foreman," answered Baldy. "Daly runs his own outfit."

Whether this was a trick or not, Rawlins did not want to go any further without consulting Beesly. He turned and hastened toward Monte.

The men forgot everything in the glory of that evening. Baldy saw fit to spread among the riders the news that cows were boomin'. He said he would not be surprised if these dogies sold for twelve dollars, which would make the Broken Heart one of the most prosperous outfits on the river. Sure he was glad they had all stuck with Daly through the tough years. Daly wasn't a man to forget his friends. He'd appreciate any man's loyalty. He and Ginger outdid themselves on a spread that night—steaks, potatoes boiled in their jackets, great bowls of camp gravy.

If the other riders thought of Daly's absence they concluded that the boss had gone on to see about cars or feed. They had no suspicion of the danger that threatened them. They were not at all surprised when Ginger expressed a desire to ride out with the herders to the bed ground, where he loafed until midnight. Before daylight, Baldy was calling the men to breakfast, and the last pair of riders started the steers to grazing before they came in to eat. By sun-up the long line was stringing out toward Del Norte, the only town along the trail.

Del Norte had been quiet for years, but was now beginning to take on new life. It even bid fair to regain its old prestige as the best cow town in the valley. The road led through the main street of the town.

"I'm suspicious of that man Beesly," Baldy told Ginger after the riders had left camp. "I think you'd better haze that chuck wagon ahead again where you can sorta see what's goin' on. I've put a saddle on Button, one of the snappiest horses we've got, and tied him behind, so's you'll have him if you need him."

Ginger pushed past the cattle and gained a mile before the herd reached Del Norte. He watched carefully, and two blocks down he saw Beesly's buckboard on a side street. Ginger also noticed Gus Reynard, the town marshal, loafing near the main street, and there were two hard-looking characters with him. "Now, I wonder what the deal is?" Ginger queried. "Anyway, I guess Baldy was right to send me ahead like he did."

He turned the mules down the next cross street and pulled the wagon in close to the sidewalk, dropped the tugs, and tied up the reins. He got on Button and rode back up an alley where he could watch Gus Reynard. The lead steers were just coming across a bridge at the head of the main street. The two hard-looking men got on their horses and rode beside the marshal, who was short and fat.

Ginger watched closely. He saw Beesly peeking out from behind a building. Sudden understanding of what was about to happen came to Ginger. "Why, the mangy coyote," he muttered. "He's fixed up with that marshal to enforce the ordinance against running loose stock on the streets. All these little towns have 'em, but they've always excepted a trail herd before."

Ginger rode around the block and stopped near where the marshal would encounter the head of the herd. Shorty

and "Timberline" were holding the steers back so that the line would not break in two when the wild range cattle began to crowd, frightened, through the streets. The men on the swing were pushing the steers forward into a compact mass. Reynard yelled something at Shorty, but the cowboy was busy handling a ticklish situation, and either did not hear or paid no attention to the marshal. The two men started to move forward, and then something happened. Ginger spurred Button, and the well-trained cow horse ran straight under the tight reins which guided him against Reynard's horse.

"Look out! Where are you goin'?" yelled the fat marshal, but Button had been sent forward at such speed that he was apparently unable to turn aside. His breast struck Reynard's pony squarely and knocked him over. The marshal rolled over into the ditch that ran along the sides of the street. Button sprang clear of the wreck and turned back the horse of the man nearest to him.

"Whoopee!" howled Ginger. "I'm a bad man from Crooked Creek!" and he jerked his gun from the holster, firing into the air.

"Hey, you crazy loon!" howled Shorty. "We can't hold these steers with you cavortin' around like that!"

"Baw!" roared one of the leaders, and broke past the men. Ginger saw Beesly hurrying down the street to direct his men in this unexpected crisis. Button whirled, obedient to a touch from Ginger, and turned the rangy steer straight up the cross street, pointing him directly toward the irate banker. Ginger slammed two more bullets into the dust behind the steer and turned to help Shorty control the stampede, which was now roaring down the main street of Del Norte. Reynard and his two men were pushed back against the sidewalk, unable to break into the surging stream of frantic cattle.

Beesly saw the angry steer charging for him and ducked into a store. The steer followed, crashing in the glass front. Broken Heart riders spurred away from the herd and rushed down side streets toward the open country beyond, in order to circle the steers the instant they emerged from the street.

Baldy was behind the drag. He galloped along, looking up the cross streets on both sides as he came. He saw the chuck wagon standing where Ginger had left it, and hastily half-hitching his bridle reins over the saddle horn, he turned his horse loose to follow the stampede, quickly hitched the mules to the wagon, and drove on to the next side street and down that at a gallop. As he turned back behind the herd he saw the lone steer that had chased Beesly coming at a swinging trot. A window sash was around his neck; one horn had hooked itself through a bolt of figured calico, and fifty yards of the flaming cloth streamed behind the victorious animal.

"Jehoshaphat! If the other steers see him with that layout on, they'll never quit runnin'. There goes our beef herd and all chance to save the Broken Heart!" moaned Baldy. He heard the patter of flying hoofs and glanced off to the left, to see Daly and another man. Daly's big black was running low and bearing straight for the decorated steer. Baldy saw his boss riding loose in the saddle, and remembered that at one time Daly had been the champion bulldogger of the San Luis Valley. "He's goin' to dump that critter in order to save the herd," howled Baldy. "Go to it, old-timer, I'm sure for you!" The big black ran up close to the steer, and Daly swung clear and threw him in record time.

Down the street came Button. Ginger was rushing to repair the damage. He sprang off and helped Daly remove the window frame from the steer's neck and unwrap the cloth! From up the street came the pounding of hoofs. Beesly, white-faced, almost ran over the

group that stood watching the steer trot off toward the now quiet herd. "You—you——" he stammered, "I'll make you smart for this!"

"Hello, Beesly," said Daly coolly. "Meet Jim Madden from Denver. I've just sold my steers to him at fourteen. We're goin to load 'em here at Del Norte. I'll be in to-morrow to pay them notes."

Baldy and Daly sat on the porch at the Broken Heart. The shadows were lengthening from the spruce forest and extending into the valley. Yellowwings were spilling music from the branches of the willows along the creek. Across the meadow rode Ginger on his favorite horse, Button. His saddle and outfit had been a present from Daly. Ginger stopped to look at a big brown horse that was now so fat that it was not to be recognized as the pile of bones he had ridden a month before.

Baldy looked at the boy admiringly. "He's sure some top hand, ain't he?"

"He put ginger into the Broken Heart, anyway," Daly agreed.

SOME ACCOMPLISHED ANIMALS

SINCE pet animals constitute so universal a pleasure, it is strange that national pet shows are of extremely recent origin. In fact, the first national exhibition of this kind was lately held in Chicago, and many and diverting were the animals that it brought forth. Among the sensational exhibits entered by amateur owners were a parrot with the astounding vocabulary of two hundred and fifty words, and even more exciting, a goldfish that could operate a windlass to hoist water to its cage.

Among the wonders were midget horses that sidewalked, a dog that gloried in five feet of height, a twenty-three-pound cat, a talking cockatoo, and trick dogs of all degrees of proficiency. Prizes were awarded animals that gave evidence of unusual intelligence as well as those that had, in their past, exhibited heroism.

FOURTEEN QUAKES IN ONE DAY

ONE earthquake would be bad enough, but fourteen seem almost inconceivable. Residents of Fairbanks, Alaska, have, nevertheless, had recently to live through the terrifying experience of this large number of quakes. Fortunately, the shock was greater than the material damage, which consisted mainly of causing beds and other furniture to roll about and clocks to stop. Many broken windows, also, bear witness to the fact that the quake was not the figment of distorted imaginations.

Reports indicate that the earthquakes seemed to be in the form of a southwesterly movement of the surface, causing a disastrous undulating motion. A heavy rumble as of thunder accompanied the disturbances and added to the terror of the occasion.

Pioneer Towns of the West

By Duane Clark

(Reno, Nevada)

TELL those miners of the West," said Abraham Lincoln to Schuyler Colfax of Reno and Virginia City, Nevada, "that I am with them and that I have a very large idea of the future possibilities of that great country." These are said to be Lincoln's last official words. Reno has justified the sentiment of these words throughout the years that have followed.

John C. Frémont led an expedition to the West through the site of the present Reno and named the Truckee River which runs through the very center of the city.

Reno was named in honor of General Jesse Reno, a Civil War hero. Its real impetus came with the discovery of gold and silver and it became the logical distributing center. It was the discovery of the Comstock Lode in Virginia City, just twelve miles over the mountain pass from Reno, that set Reno on its feet. Soon after, the Central Pacific and Union Pacific railroads made their way from East and West, converging at a short distance from Reno. Stagecoaches were used at that time to meet the trains carrying mail as well as passengers.

Nevada has rich silver, gold, lead, and other mines, and while mining is the principal industry, the section surrounding Reno is also rich agriculturally. Washoe County, in which Reno is located, is called the "recreational center of America." Wherever one may turn, scenes of beauty greet the eye. The climate is considered especially attractive. The air is dry and pure, scented by mountain pines, and so clear that one may see mountains hundreds of

miles away with unusual distinctness. Reno claims to average no more than sixty-five cloudy days during the year. The maximum temperature taken in an official report gives spring as sixty-one degrees; summer, eighty-three degrees, autumn, sixty-six degrees, and winter, forty-five degrees. It is possible to play golf and tennis in mid-winter. An occasional cold snap freezes the Truckee River, the lakes in Idlewild Park, and University Lake, when, skating is enjoyed. Reno is at an elevation of forty-five hundred feet.

Mount Rose, a ten-thousand-foot peak near Reno, is the objective of enthusiastic climbers. Skiing, tobogganing, and sleighing are indulged in at Truckee, thirty-five miles from Reno, during their winter carnival. Reno is matchless for its outdoor opportunities for activity. Hunting and fishing, horseback trips, hiking, and many other sports, claim the residents for recreation.

In the vicinity of Reno are natural hot springs which are believed by physicians and chemists to have great curative properties.

For the vacationists who want to go to a resort of beauty that is not too far away from the home fires, Lake Tahoe, at the edge of the Sierras, answers every purpose. An hour's ride places one among some of the country's greatest scenery.

In the heart of the city of Reno is Idlewild Park, which has a beautiful swimming pool, and attractive picnic grounds. Wild game and domestic birds may be found here, doves, peacocks, wild geese, eagles, buffalo, elk, deer, and antelope. Also, there is an aquarium and fish hatchery where trout and other game fish are propagated and placed in the streams for fishermen. Wingfield Park, on the banks of the Truckee River, maintains children's playgrounds, wading pools, and six tennis courts. Other sports to be had at Reno are the annual race meets of the Silver State Jockey Club.

Reno is the center of the highway system in Nevada. The Victory and Lincoln Highways pass through it. Because of its transportation facilities, the cost of property at shipping points is much lower than in other cities of similar opportunities.

Because of Reno's location, lumber may be brought there and manufactured into doors, sash, millwork, crates, and boxes, and reshipped to points in Colorado and East at through rates prevailing from the point of origin, plus a nominal charge. Nevada produces raw materials and manufactures various nonmetallics. An important live-stock industry gives opportunities for the manufacture of by-products. At present, Reno has two meat-packing plants; a rock products plant for building interiors and exteriors; rock works; an oil-burning stove and furnace manufacturing plant; an ice-cream plant; machine shops, a soap factory; planing mills; flour mills, cigar factories; a mattress factory; creameries, and rock-crushing plants. The territory served by Reno's manufacturers and distributing houses has a population of approximately eighty thousand people. A close bond exists between buyer and seller in Reno, so strikes are unknown.

Reno has fourteen churches. The government consists of a mayor and a board of councilmen, which efficiently care for its sixteen thousand people. Fire loss in Reno is exceptionally low, due primarily to its fire department, which is equipped at an expense of seventy-five thousand dollars.

Water comes from the high Sierras and is distributed from three large reservoirs. Some employees of the city's water system have been in service for twenty years. Reno has twenty-six miles of paved streets, and forty miles of sewers. A mile south of the city is a field of one hundred and sixteen acres

which is used for aviation purposes. What is considered the finest hangar in the United States has been constructed here by the county of Washoe, at a cost of thirty-five thousand dollars. Two mail planes arrive each day.

Reno has many beautiful homes, with tree-shaded lawns and paved streets. Aside from an up-to-date and efficient Chamber of Commerce, there are many organizations, some of which are, the Rotary, Lions, Kiwanis, Exchange, Sciots Clubs, the American Legion, Anti-Saloon League, and other business associations. There are enough women's clubs and lodges to fill the wants of every one.

Reno has two daily newspapers, the *Gazette* and the *Journal,* one morning and one evening. All printing is handled in Reno by means of several modern plants, and a well-equipped advertising agency provides for the advertising art.

The visitor can gather full data of historical value or other information from the Nevada State Building, which was erected at a cost of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. Part of this unusual structure is given over to the Nevada Historical Society for a display of historical relics of the West. An auditorium seating twenty-five thousand is available for conventions and gatherings. Other important and imposing public buildings are, the library, City Hall, post office, Masonic Temple, Elks Home, Young Men's Christian Association, and the Washoe County Fish Hatchery Building.

Reno has two hospitals. The University of Nevada is situated on a sixty-acre campus, overlooking the city. Men's and women's dormitories are near a charming lake. The College of Art and Science offers special opportunities to the ambitious student. Those interested in mining, mechanical, civil, and electrical engineering, may go to the College of Engineering. The Mackay School of Mines is known throughout America for its fine training. Courses in agriculture, live stock, and irrigation, farm and ranch management, may be had at the College of Agriculture.

Besides the colleges are five grammar schools, four kindergartens, a business college, and a junior and senior high school. The scholarship standard in Reno is exceptionally high.

Under the State laws of Nevada, made by the founders of the State at the time of the Civil War, it was decreed that six months' residence in Nevada constituted citizenship rights, the full power to vote and take on the work of a man or woman of the State. Many people have taken advantage of the short duration necessary to become a citizen to establish residence here in order to obtain a divorce. Much unpleasant notoriety has arisen from this decree, which in reality is no different from that in any other State, except as to length of time. The laws and respect for law and order, are as sacred here as anywhere else. Many who come to Reno for the purpose of severing the bonds of matrimony are so entranced by the beauties and advantages of the community that they make it their permanent home.

Among the principal crops raised in the vicinity of Reno are wheat, barley, potatoes, hay, and alfalfa. One of the most rapidly growing industries is live stock. Poultry and dairying are also on the increase.

In truth, Reno is one of the paradise spots of the West, well worth visiting.

The Round-Up

WE love you all, each and every one of you readers of WESTERN STORY MAGAZINE, no matter how you get your copy, even if you beg, steal, or borrow it. But, jest the same, we must confess to having a particularly soft spot tucked away in our anatomy for the man or woman who'll up and plank down real money in advance for a subscription. It certainly is a confession of faith in us and our ability to "deliver the goods." You see, it's money in advance and no questions asked, just a complete expression of confidence on the part of the subscriber that he'll be sure of getting his money's worth, and that, by sending in a subscription, he'll save money, the trouble of going after his magazine, and also miss the chance of finding the "sold out" sign on the dealer's door.

Here, now, is R. Arnold Lee, R. F. D. No. 1, Box 54, Marietta, Minnesota, with six good dollars. He says:

"BOSS OF THE ROUND-UP: I like your wonderful WESTERN STORY MAGAZINE so much that I will have to subscribe for it again. So here is my check for six dollars. With it please renew my old subscription and send me WESTERN STORY MAGAZINE for another year.

"I wouldn't want to miss a single copy of your excellent and exciting magazine for anything. All in our family like to read the WESTERN STORY MAGAZINE. I think this magazine is the best of its kind published. May it ever be! You have sure made it better and better every year. May it live long!

"The authors I like the best are Max Brand, Frank Richardson Pierce, Clem Yore, Ray Humphreys, Robert Ormond Case, Cherry Wilson, Seth Ranger, George Owen Baxter, Peter Henry Morland, John Frederick, and Robert J. Horton. But practically all of the writers are good, and may their pens be kept busy!

"I'll continue reading WESTERN STORY MAGAZINE, breathing, through its pages, the spirit of the outdoors of America's West and Northwest, and always regretting when each copy is read completely through.

"Also, I'd like to add that I enjoy the poems, articles, and miscellaneous items. They are all very interesting, the two last being not only entertaining but instructive and educational."

M. E. Muirhead, Traer, Iowa, is surely one whom Berry will show particular interest in listening to:

"DEAR BOSS: I have not been interested until recently in reading Western stories. One of your writers, Raymond Berry has been responsible for this recent interest. I just finished his 'Fighting for Thoroughbreds,' which is a clean, entertaining yarn. Will you soon have more of his stories in the magazine?

"If you ever pass on 'bouquets,' you might tell Berry that he has some interested readers out here."

These fellows who won't give their names—too bashful or something—can't expect to have the boys and girls send them information direct. Take, for instance, "R. & W.," who hail from Central Village, Connecticut:

"BOSS AND FOLKS: May we join you at the camp fire for a few minutes? No Indians ever liked the camp fire more. Now for our question.

"We should like to get all the information possible on a modern prairie schooner—that is, a house grafted onto an automobile. We want all the conveniences possible, without their taking up too much room. A crew of three would like to explore the West in this craft. We should like to know, also, the minimum cost of such a venture.

"While we consider the WESTERN STORY MAGAZINE an exceptionally good magazine, we have a few suggestions for its further improvement.

"First, except in conversation, good English is preferable. Then, more stories by the following authors are bound to make the WESTERN STORY MAGAZINE more popular: Cherry Wilson and Robert Ormond Case. Also, we should like to hear more about our friends, Thunder Moon, Dynamite Smith, and Windy and Lonesome.

"Well, we'll turn in now and dream happy dreams of the West which our magazine tells us so much about, and which we hope to see some day. Thank you."

Why don't you try John North, of "Where To Go and How To Get There," R. & W.? John is fine at that kind of thing. Just send him a letter and find out if he isn't.

Cecil Henderson, 1017 Findlay Street, Cincinnati, Ohio, now steps into the firelight:

"BOSS AND FOLKS: For years the WESTERN STORY MAGAZINE has been my pal, and now it seems to be part of my life. Such interesting stories! Their equal I've never found in any other magazine. And, believe me, I've read several publications in my time.

"The *Detective Story Magazine* also has very interesting stories, but, although I like good detective stories, it seems I hanker most after the outdoor stories of the WESTERN STORY MAGAZINE.

"I have only one regret: that the WESTERN STORY MAGAZINE cannot be published more often."

Miss R. Pendrak, Ludlow, Massachusetts, is a strong girl, looking for work in the West. Any of you fine families living out there got a place for her?

"BOSS AND FOLKS: I've been reading the WESTERN STORY MAGAZINE for two years and haven't missed one copy as yet. Haven't any intentions of doing so, either, for words cannot express the keen enjoyment I get from reading these stories, all written by excellent authors.

"I wonder if there's any work for a strong girl out West? I am city bred

and willing to do any sort of work, just to get a chance to breathe real air. Could any of the folks suggest something? Thank you."

And now for a good bit of singin'. With your united help and assistance we'll do "Juan Murray," and we'll do it strong, loud, and hearty.

JUAN MURRAY.

My name is Juan Murray, and, hard for my fate,
I was born and raised in Texas, that good old Lone Star State.
I have been to many a round-up, boys, have worked on the trail,
Have stood many a long, cold guard through the rain—yes, sleet and hail.
I have rode the Texas bronchos that pitched from morning till noon,
And have seen many a storm, boys, between sunrise, yes, and noon.

I am a jolly cowboy and have roamed all over the West,
And among the broncho riders I rank among the best.
But when I left old Midland, with voice right then I spoke:
"I never will see you again until the day I croak."

But since I left old Texas so many sights I have saw,
A-traveling from my native State way out to Mexico—
I am looking all around me and cannot help but smile
To see my nearest neighbors all in the Mexican style.

I left my home in Texas to dodge the ball and chain.
In the State of Sonora I will forever remain.
Farewell to my mother, my friends that are so dear;
I would like to see you all again, my lonesome heart to cheer.

I have a word to speak, boys, only another to say:
Don't ever be a cow thief, don't ever ride a stray;
Be careful of your line, boys, and keep it on your tree—
Just suit yourself about it, for it is nothing to me.

But if you start to rustling you will come to some sad fate.
You will have to go to prison and work for the State.
Don't think that I am lying and trying to tell a joke,
For the writer has experienced just every word he's spoke.

It is better to be honest and let others' stock alone
Than to leave your native country and seek a Mexican home.
For if you start to rustling you will surely come to see
The State of Sonora—be an outcast just like me.

Miss Helen Rivers, who conducts this department, will see to it that you will be able to make friends with other readers, though thousands of miles may separate you. It must be understood that Miss Rivers will undertake to exchange letters only between men and men, boys and boys, women and women, girls and girls. Letters will be forwarded direct when correspondents so wish; otherwise they will be answered here. Be sure to inclose forwarding postage when sending letters through The Hollow Tree.

Address: Helen Rivers, care The Hollow Tree, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City.

SOUTH of the Prescott cow country are Black Canyon and Black Canyon Road, in the heart of the rangeland of Arizona. North of the Gila River country is this Black Canyon cow country, with the Black Canyon Road climbing the mesas to the north of Canon.

DEAR MISS RIVERS: Fifty miles from the railroad is Canon, on the Black Canyon road, in the heart of the cow country of Arizona. We are fifty-four miles north of Phœnix, and about sixty miles to the south of Prescott, the rodeo city of Arizona. This is cow country through here, folks, and neighbors are few and far between. Here at Canon there are only a handful of people. And about a quarter of a mile away there are about a dozen Mexicans. Canon is nestled down in a valley between the Bradshaw Mountains and the Newriver Mountains, and all around here is cattle country which, incidentally, has been pretty hard hit recently on account of the drought. However, despite the fact that this country is subject to drought occasionally we intend to settle down here—we are newcomers from Minnesota.

We have real, honest-to-goodness cowboys here, and the contests at Prescott are the real thing. The country south of Prescott is the cow country of Arizona, and I guess that many a yarn could be told by the old-timers about the Black Canyon country and the Black Canyon road. The Black Canyon is a series of valleys between Canon and Prescott—there is a series of mesas, one atop another, until Prescott, the mile-high city, is reached.

I'll be glad to tell you all about this Arizona wilderness—the sagebrush country hereabouts, and all about the fall round-up, too, if you-all care to hear. I am fond of horseback riding, and some day, after I have lived in this cow country a little longer, I am going to learn to ride the broncs, too.

LASSIE OF THE BLACK CANYON COUNTRY.
Care of The Tree.

Gateway of the Boulder Dam.

DEAR MISS RIVERS: This is Las Vegas, way down here in the southeastern part of Nevada, and it's the gateway to the great Boulder Dam country that you-all have heard so much talked about lately. No, folks, I'm not aiming to stay in this here country long, for I'm traveling with a carnival and we'll be moving on right pronto. Have just made a *pasear* from Seattle through Idaho, Montana, down through Utah, and right now we're here in Nevada, but soon we'll be on the sierra edge of California. Then we'll probably hop back Arizona way and maybe over to New Orleans.

Seattle's my stomping ground, folks, and

that country up there where I was born and sorta raised is the one I can give the full bally for, and I certainly will if I get some letters *muy pronto*. DON STRADLEY.

Care of The Tree.

Placer mining in Nevada.

DEAR MISS RIVERS: I've heard a lot about the placer mining in Nevada and I'm on the hunt for a pard who has one of these placer mines out in that wide, unsettled, desert country. I'm forty-eight myself, have been an iron-ore miner for years, and want to get out in the open on a placer prospect of some sort. I don't mean that I want an old-timer pard, but I would prefer one somewhat near my own age, and one who knows the placer-mining game pretty thoroughly. I have a good-sized grubstake all ready for the start, and am hoping to hear from some of those placer miners out Nevada way.

WILLIAM H. T.

Care of The Tree.

Miles from the home stomping grounds.

DEAR MISS RIVERS: I am nineteen hundred miles from my home stomping grounds and hankering for a few lines from the old Holla to check me up a bit. I've been through nine States, and can tell you-all a thing or two about the Seminole Indians, if you care to hear my yarns. I'm thirty-five, and will have a word for all the folks, young or old, who take a *pasear* over my way.

ALTON SWEET.

Route 3, Box 158, Stevens Point, Wisconsin.

Texas ranch miss.

DEAR MISS RIVERS: This is the Big Spring ranch country, in northwestern Texas, a few miles west of the Sweetwater country. We are in the south of the Texas panhandle, folks. I was raised on a ranch and have lived in the saddle a little over nineteen years. Several years ago I hiked through New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, and on to the coast. New Mexico is a lovely country, and so is Arizona, too. I stayed in California for two years, but I sure was lonesome for the Texas panhandle, so here I am back on the ranch again, riding the range with the boys.

I wish the girls of Wyoming, New Mexico, and Montana, would tell me something of their country—and all the rest of the girls can write, too. I'll tell a lot about ranch life in the Texas panhandle if you-all will address your letters to

PANHANDLE PEGGY.

Care of The Tree.

The Black Canyon country with the Black Canyon road climbing the mesas to the mile-high city is the famous cow country to the south of Prescott, in the range lands of Arizona. Wear your friend-maker badges, folks, and yarn with the cowboys and cowgirls of the Black Canyon country.

Twenty-five cents in coin or stamps sent to The Hollow Tree Department, Western Story Magazine, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City, will bring you either the pin style or the button for the coat lapel. In ordering, be sure to state which you wish.

South of the Devils Lake country.

DEAR MISS RIVERS: My home is North Dakota—in the central part of the State, and to give you an idea where the little town of Medina is located I'll mention the Devils Lake country and the Sheyenne River country that you-all have heard of. We are just about a hundred miles south of the Devils Lake country and just west of the Sheyenne Valley country. Jamestown is our county seat.

I'm just another lonely lass, folks, who is seeking correspondents, and also information of the Far West. I want to get in touch with some real Western girls, some who live on ranches and are cowgirls. I love all outdoor sports, especially horseback riding. And as I am planning to go West some time I'd like to get acquainted with you-all.

ROSALIE EBEL.

Medina, North Dakota.

Nicaraguan outpost.

DEAR MISS RIVERS: May I ask some of the Western hombres to write to a lonesome marine in Nicaragua? This is, at the present time, the northernmost marine outpost in Nicaragua, and since bandit activities have ceased, we have plenty of time for correspondence. Now, folks, please get out your writing materials *muy pronto*, for it takes

nearly four weeks for us to get mail here by train, steamship, plane, ox-cart, and finally by pack mules!

PRIVATE JOSEPH BASCKAY.
Fifty-first Company, Fifth Regiment, San Albino, Nicaragua.

North of old Mexico.

DEAR MISS RIVERS: Below us a little less than fifty miles are the Mexican border and Old Mexico. We are just west of the Rio Grande on its downward journey toward Texas and the Mexican border. This is the southwest of New Mexico, folks. I'd like to hear from some of the girls of El Paso, and from all over the big Longhorn State of Texas. I'd also like to hear from girls in Missouri, Kansas, and from all over the South and West. I'm sixteen, and would like to have Pen Pals who are near my own age.

MARY HALFORD.

"I'm a boy of eighteen, and interested in all outdoor sports and work. I'd like to hear from some Pen Pals from all over, very pronto, and will answer all letters. I wonder if there's a rancher who would give a tenderfoot something to do this coming summer? In return, I wouldn't want anything but a place to hang my hat and a place around the chuck wagon and a bed roll. I am much interested in the West, and may take a *pasear* into Mexico very soon." Address your letters to Thomas H., Jr., folks. His address is in Care of The Tree.

"Although only nineteen, I am a widow with a baby girl to support. And I am wondering if there is not some one, somewhere, on a farm or ranch who would be willing to give us a home in return for my work. Anyway, folks, I will be glad to get your cheerful letters," says Mrs. Jeanne, Care of The Tree.

"I am a traveling hombre, just seventeen, and have trekked through the States of Arkansas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri, and Texas. I'd like to locate Pen Pals in the Northwest or in Canada. So get busy, folks, and fill the mail box." This young fellow is Edwin Sharpe, Route B., Geary, Oklahoma.

"Am coming West next summer to stay, folks. I want to hear from Pen Pals of the Southwest—New Mexico and Arizona, and I'd like to hear from folks who are willing to answer inquiries about their part of the country. I'll return the stamps, folks, and send snaps and views of Florida." This Sister Gangster is Miss A. M. Woodhull, Box 92, Cedar Key, Florida. She is twenty-one.

"Here I come from Arkansas—the Seven-wonder State. I live on a farm west of the great hot springs. Yep, this is a wonderful State—beautiful hills and timber. I like all outdoor sports such as horseback riding, hunting, and fishing. I'd like to hear from some of the Gang in Arizona or New Mexico," says Macie Cole, Washita Route, Mount Ida, Arkansas.

"Just let a West Virginia girl have a word or two, folks. I was born and raised in West Virginia, but I want to go West. Yes, indeed, I ride horseback. I suppose all you Western girls ride? Let's hear from you-all, especially those of you who are in your teens, as I am." This Sister of the Gang is Mary Coleman, Box 554, Oak Hill, West Virginia.

Elizabeth Tillett, 217 Arlington Avenue, Lexington, Kentucky, is a little Kentucky girl who is wanting to corral some Pen Pals among the girls of the old Holla. Don't overlook this new member, folks.

"I'm a young girl from the sunny South. I love outdoor sports, and am equally at home in an airplane or a motor boat. I'm sixteen, and would like to hear from the girls of the West, but all are welcome to write. Yes, I'll ex-

change snaps." This is Edna Huffman, folks, and her address is 607 East Belmont Street, Pensacola, Florida.

"This hombre is taking things easy after a prolonged illness, and feels the need of heaps of letters, folks. It has been years since I have written to the Gang, but if any of my old Pen Pals see this, I'd welcome a letter from them. Also, would like to hear from any one, anywhere. I am growing gladiolus for pastime, and expect to go into it on a large scale eventually. I'd enjoy hearing from flower lovers, too. My age, folks, is twenty-four." Ralph D. Richards' address is 264 East Thirty-fourth Street, Portland, Oregon.

"Am seventeen years old, from the sunny South, and would like to hear from some of the Gang," says Dell Fillingim, 700 East Belmont Street, Pensacola, Florida.

"I'm twenty-eight, Danish, and am sure tired of this city life and wanting to get out West. I'd be willing to travel horseback, by car, or hike, so long as I had a pard. I'll be glad to hear from some of you folks who are looking for a pal and who like the open spaces, and a gun." This Gangster is Dick Strand, 518 West 153rd Street, New York City.

"Who wants to know all about Canada and Alaska, and something about Paris, Monte Carlo, Moscow, and Shanghai? Yes, I'll be very glad to oblige, folks. I'll also be glad to give you some dope on rifle shooting. I'm twenty-three, folks, and my address is Private L. G. Hall, U. S. N. T. S., Main Gate, Great Lakes, Illinois."

"I'd like to be a Pen Pal to as many folks as would care to write me, from all over the world, including our great West. Are there any rangers' wives who would care to drop me a line? I love the outdoors, although I live only sixteen miles from the great busy city of Chicago." Address your letters to Adeline Hayes, 603 N. Maple Avenue, Brookfield, Illinois.

"Was born and have lived all of my life in Pennsylvania, but we—my children and myself—have dreams of some day going West where we can have a cottage in the mountains. A cottage with a large stone fireplace, a window facing the sun, a table with a bright cover, and books! I would like to hear from some of the middle-aged married women of the Gang, or from those who, like myself, are widows with a family to care for. And you may address your letters to Mrs. Pennsylvania, Care of The Tree."

"I would like to get in touch with a boy the same age as myself. I am an English boy sixteen years of age, and I have a keen liking for outdoor sport. The old Holla seems to be a good way of making friends over in America, and the old Holla will find that I will prove a true Gangster, even though so far away." This new member is C. Rose, 30 Aked Street, Ardwick, Manchester, England.

"Maybe some of you folks would like to hear from a little Indiana village," says P. C. Bryan, Box 34, Newcastle, Indiana. This Gangster is thirty-five, and wants to hear from the more grown-up members of the old Holla.

"I'm a lonely young woman of twenty-seven, and would like to hear from any members of the big 'family' who would care to write. I've never traveled, and feel that a few letters from far places would help to cure my discontent." This Sister Gangster is Veta Hoyt, 17 Colson Street, North Billerica, Massachusetts.

WHERE TO GO AND HOW TO GET THERE

by John North

It is our aim in this department to be of genuine practical help and service to those who wish to make use of it. Don't hesitate to write to us and give us the opportunity of assisting you to the best of our ability.

Address all communications to John North, care of WESTERN STORY MAGAZINE, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.

A HOMBRE who is seriously considering nut-growing as a business, is Jim K., of Chicago, Illinois, who is trekking westward. "Can you tell me what part of the West is best suited to the raising of almonds, Mr. North?" queries this citizen of the Prairie State. "I've been told that California is the spot for such an industry, and would like to know if this information is correct. I'd also like to know what kind of soil is required for almonds, how many different varieties there are, and how long it takes to bring an orchard into profitable bearing. In fact, any information you can give me on this subject will be most welcome. I've read WESTERN STORY MAGAZINE for a number of years now, and after noticing that you seem to give helpful advice on any topic connected with the outdoor West I've brought my questions to you."

We'd say that Jim's information is good, as far as it goes, for California, as a whole, is especially well adapted to the raising of almonds. There are trees growing in practically every county of the State. Jim will find the chief commercial producing area to be, however, the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys, together with the adjacent foothill areas. Almond trees are found, it is true, in a number of Eastern States, but not to any great extent, as California produces about ninety-nine per cent of the entire crop in the United States.

The soil requirements of the almond are those of depth, fertility, and good drainage, both surface and subsurface. There are about sixty different varieties of almonds, which are classified into two general kinds, the hard and the paper-shell. We believe that six years is the time usually allowed in which to bring almond trees into profitable bearing. Almonds are grown most successfully on the Orland Irrigation Project in California, and we feel sure that Jim could procure much valuable information by making some inquiries of the superintendent of that project.

Speaking of Uncle Sam's irrigation projects reminds us that P. H. K., of

Topeka, Kansas, is asking some questions about one of 'em. "I'm interested in the Sun River Project out in Montana, Mr. North," writes this hombre, "and am coming to you for some information. Just where is this project located? What is the climate like? How is the land irrigated? What crops are grown, and is the country suitable for live-stock raising? How are transportation facilities? As you can savvy, I'm out for every little fact that I can collect before making up my mind to trek out that way."

P. H. K. is a wise chap. We believe most strongly in finding out everything possible about a locality before going to settle there. If such a plan is followed, there are fewer regrets afterwards. The Sun River Project is situated in Teton, Lewis and Clark, and Cascade Counties, Montana, lying north and west of the city of Great Falls. The elevation of the lands is approximately three thousand seven hundred feet above sea level. The temperature varies from forty degrees below zero to one hundred degrees above. The extreme low temperatures, however, are unusual and occur only for short periods. The frost-free season averages from May 20th to September 15th.

The Fort Shaw division is irrigated by the Fort Shaw Canal which takes water direct from Sun River. The lands on the north side of the river are irrigated by water diverted by the Sun River diversion dam through canals and laterals to the individual farms. Water is furnished by the Sun River and its tributaries, Deep Creek, a tributary of Teton River; and Bowl and Basin Creeks, tributaries of the Flathead River. Domestic water is obtained from wells.

Irrigation works have been constructed for about fifty-two thousand acres, of which approximately fourteen thousand acres are in the Fort Shaw division, and thirty-eight thousand in the Greenfields division. P. H. K. will find the general character of the irrigable lands rolling, with ample fall for irrigation. The surface is reasonably smooth, and very little leveling is done. The soils, mainly a light clay or silt loam with some gravel, are fertile and give good results when properly farmed. The crops grown are alfalfa, native hay, grain, and vegetables. Sugar beets are grown experimentally. Good yields are obtained from crops adapted to the district.

Yes, live stock is raised, but on account of the cold winters it is necessary that all cattle be protected against severe storms and well provided with feed. Many settlers are engaged in raising hogs, cattle, and sheep. Dairying is profitable if cows are properly housed and attended. The grass-covered plains that extend for many miles outside of the project furnish summer feed for cattle and sheep. The forest reserve in the mountains to the west also furnishes good pasture.

Great Falls, a city of twenty-five thousand, is located in the easterly portion of the project. This city has a large smelter, several flour mills, and many miscellaneous plants which employ a large number of men and furnish a market for much of the produce grown under irrigation. A large packing plant at this place takes care of most of the fat hogs and cattle produced locally.

The project is traversed by three lines of the Great Northern Railway, and by one line of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway. The Park to Park Highway runs through the project. The principal towns tributary to the lands now under irrigation are Sun River, Fort Shaw, Simms, and Fairfield. The project is served by schools and churches. Recreation may be had near by, for a few hours' drive is all that is required to reach Glacier National Park and many other fine summer resorts.

Well, some of our readers are interested in irrigation projects, while others are keen about homestead lands. To the latter class belongs Fred G., of Denver, Colorado. "I've read so much about the prairie provinces of Canada that I'm seriously considering taking a chance up that way myself," writes this Westerner. "Now, I'm especially interested in Manitoba, Mr. North. Is there still free government land to be had there for homesteads? What would such land be worth, and would it be very difficult to bring it under cultivation? I mean by that would it be awfully hard to clear? I'm not afraid of buckling down to work but would like to know just what to expect. And now two more questions. Is there any demand up there for farm laborers? And what would be the chance for an artisan or clerk in a town?"

Yes, there are still large areas of government land in Manitoba which are open to homesteading. It is claimed by the old-timers up that way that the homesteader of to-day has the opportunity of acquiring land having a greater immediate value than had the pioneer who secured the apparently preferable homestead land of pioneer times. When the plains of Manitoba were first settled, wild land had a value of only two or three dollars per acre. Even improved lands were worth only about five dollars per acre. At the present time, homesteads may be secured in Manitoba that are worth, in their wild state, anywhere from five to twenty dollars per acre.

As might be expected, Fred will find that more labor is necessary to bring these lands under cultivation than was required by the open prairies. On the other hand, he need not be frightened away by thinking the job unreasonably difficult. The light woods common to much of the homestead land of to-day do not offer serious resistance to clearing. Indeed, the returns in firewood and fencing and building materials often amply repay the cost of clearing. And upon improvement Fred will find that such lands will have a producing value at least equal to and in many cases greater than the improved prairie lands.

We are told upon good authority that farm laborers are often in demand, especially during the extra busy seasons of seeding, harvesting, and threshing. Moreover, the increased attention which is being paid to mixed and dairy farming is having a wholesome tendency to spread the work of the farm more evenly over the year. And during the leisure season settlers may often get jobs working at drainage undertakings and road building. In fact, there is much work to be done all the year round, and farm laborers, especially married men, are being engaged in increasing numbers by yearly contracts.

The chances for the artisan or clerk to find work in a town in Manitoba are not so promising. There is a tendency toward overcrowding the urban centers, and it is not advisable for prospective settlers to trek up there on a chance. They should first have good prospects of a job. In fact, the authorities do not hold out inducements or assurance of success to would-be city workers, as the ranks of such are already out of proportion to the number of rural settlers.

On the other hand, many small towns offer excellent opportunities for professionally trained people as well as artisans. But it is wise to be informed before making any move, and we shall be glad to tell anybody interested in Manitoba just where such information may be procured.

MISSING

This department conducted in duplicate in DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE and WESTERN STORY MAGAZINE, thus giving readers double service, is offered free of charge to our readers. Its purpose is to aid them in getting in touch with persons of whom they have lost track.

While it will be better to use your name in the notice, we will print your request "blind" if you prefer. In sending "blind" notices, you must, of course, give us your right name and address, so that we can forward promptly any letters that may come for you. We reserve the right to reject any notice that seems to us unsuitable. Because "copy" for a magazine must go to the printer long in advance of publication, don't expect to see your notice till a considerable time after you send it.

If it can be avoided, please do not send us a "General Delivery" post-office address, for experience has proved that these persons who are not specific as to address often have mail that we send them returned to us marked "not found." It would be well, also, to notify us of any change in your address.

Now, readers, help those whose friends or relatives are missing, as you would like to be helped if you were in a similar position.

WARNING.—Do not forward money to any one who sends you a letter or telegram, asking for money "to get home," et cetera, until you are absolutely certain that the author of such telegram or letter is the person you are seeking.

Address all communications to Missing Department, DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City.

CULLINANE, MICHAEL.—Born in County Kerry, Ireland, about sixty-five years ago. Lived in Jersey City, New Jersey, for several years. Left there in 1907. Information appreciated by his son, Tim, care of this magazine.

AUSTIN, DOCTOR JAMES.—Lived in New York City about 1885. Died at Saratoga Springs, New York, in 1888. Would like his home address in New York City. Address, H. C. Alspach, care of this magazine.

AUSTIN, GEORGE.—Son of Doctor James Austin. Died in Boston, Massachusetts, recently. Would like his home address. Write to H. C. Alspach, care of this magazine.

FORLENZA, NICHOLAS A.—Twenty-one years old. Five feet five inches tall, black hair and brown eyes. Left home October 18, 1929. Last heard from November 4, 1929, at Atlantic City, New Jersey. Information appreciated by Elmo Forlenza, 43 Van Duzer Street, Tompkinsville, Staten Island, New York.

GIDDY, MRS. JOHN, nee **SUTHERLAND.**—Left Scotland for Canada, sixteen years ago. Last heard from in Toronto, Ontario. Information appreciated by her younger sister, Greta, now Mrs. James Forsyth, Thornburn, Pictou County, Nova Scotia, Canada.

BRIFFIN, DAN A.—Last seen in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in 1914. Important. Please write to Mary Donaghue, Box 827, Portland, Oregon.

RESLER, JOSEPH.—Last heard from in 1923. Believed to be either in Detroit, Michigan, or McKeesport, Pennsylvania. Information appreciated by Mrs. Catherine Resler, 38 Midland Avenue, Midland, Pennsylvania.

WARBURTON, JOHN, ALICE, and JAMES.—Last heard from in Bolden, England. Information appreciated by W. E. Warburton, Box 671, Pocahontas, Virginia.

AUBREY, ERNEST.—Twenty-seven years old. Blond, blue eyes. Last seen in Hunter, Missouri, in 1916. Information appreciated by an old schoolmate, Florence Newland, Box 1313, Lamar, Missouri.

NOTICE.—I was placed in the Waverly Baby Home, in Portland, Oregon, August 15, 1907. My mother's name was Florence Brown. Information appreciated by Thelma Gertrude, care of this magazine.

MATHEWS, LUTHER.—Last heard from in Aberdeen, South Dakota, in 1918. Information appreciated by Siss, care of this magazine.

MARTIN, WILLIAM V.—Formerly of New York City. Information appreciated by Norman J. Reagan, 307 Breckenridge Avenue, Buffalo, New York.

ATTENTION.—Would like to hear from members of Company E, 11th Engineers, who were stationed at Corozal, Canal Zone, from 1924 to 1927. Address, Ervin R. Wetzel, Aviation Field, U. S. Marines, Ocotal, Nicaragua.

PATHYSON, MRS. BELLE, and son, **JOHN.**—Information appreciated by Mrs. Matt Hogan, Salem, Missouri.

BARKER, ROBERT.—I have news of Charles. Please write to Dorothy Keller, 222 South Genesee Street, Waukegan, Illinois.

MOORE, ORVAL A.—We are still friends. Please write to Dorothy Keller, 222 South Genesee Street, Waukegan, Illinois.

PAL.—Saw your ad, but did not know if message was for me. Send another and put your initials. Address Buddy of Bridge Days, care of this magazine.

NOTICE.—When I was a few hours old, I was taken from my mother by Doctor C. Reed, of Trenton, New Jersey, to the home of Mrs. D. Steepy, in Trenton. I would like to find my parents. I am now twenty-five years old. Please write to Mrs. Myrtle Sliter, R. D. 1, Polk, Pennsylvania.

SLIM OF PITTSBURGH.—Everything can be fixed all right. Please come and see me or write to Curly of Johnstown, care of this magazine.

CLUTE, VELMA BEATRICE.—Was born July 8, 1912, and left with Mr. and Mrs. Jones, of Hornell, New York, when she was five months old. Information appreciated by her broken-hearted mother, Mrs. E. L. Irish, care of Mrs. D. Ingraham, 31 Caledonia Street, N. E., Grand Rapids, Michigan.

C. R. C.—Mamma is dead and John needs your help. B. married H. Please come home or write to D. M. C., Greenview, Illinois.

FLOOD, JERRY A.—I am worried about you. Please write to Betty, care of this magazine.

SIMLEY, JOHN W.—Last heard from in Kansas City, Missouri, in 1907. Information appreciated by his son, J. Glen Simley, care of this magazine.

DICKISON, MRS. PAUL, nee **VIOLET BEAVIS** or **JENNINGS.**—Married Paul Dickison, in 1917, just before she left Springfield, Colorado. Last heard from in Oklahoma City, Oklahome, in 1918. Please write to your cousin, A. E. H., care of this magazine.

DeMARS, AGNES.—When she was eleven, in 1926, she lived in West Houghton, Michigan. I left Houghton and went to Westwood, California. Lost her address. Information appreciated by Olive, care of this magazine.

THOMPSON, ROSE A.—Twenty years old. Blonde, blue eyes, and about five feet nine inches tall. Last seen in Santa Cruz, California, in 1927. Believed to have married a man named McDonald. Information appreciated by R. L. Thompson, U. S. S. "Lexington," care of Postmaster, Tacoma, Washington.

SCHLADETZKY, FRANK.—Eighteen years old. Six feet tall, brown hair and blue eyes. Weighs about one hundred and forty-five pounds. Last heard from in California, in August, 1929. Information appreciated by his mother, Mrs. Lena Schladetzky 5545 Swift Avenue, Seattle, Washington.

WRIGHT.—Would like to hear from people having this name. Address Ruth Wright, 617 South Eighteenth Street, Omaha, Nebraska.

FORREST, LOUIS H.—Twenty-seven years old. The foster son of Charles K. and Gertrude Forrest. Was taken from Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, in 1906, to California. Information appreciated by his mother, Mrs. C. Lefley, 742 Montana Avenue, Portland, Oregon.

EIDE, PEARL.—Born September 11, 1900, at St. Paul, Minnesota. Five feet two inches tall, blue-gray eyes, dark hair, medium complexion, and weighs about one hundred pounds. Last seen in Minneapolis, Minnesota, December 1, 1928. Information appreciated by her husband, James Eide, 1801 First Avenue, South, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

RICHTER, SAM.—Last seen at Longview, Washington, in August, 1929. Believed to have gone to Oregon. Remember the days by the river? Please write to L. C. H., care of this magazine.

STENGEL, CARL ANTONE.—Thirty years old. Five feet six inches tall, dark-brown hair and eyes. Speaks German. Was overseas as an interpreter for the United States forces during the World War. Worked in hotel in L., Washington, in January, 1928. May be in California. Son, born October 6, 1928, was adopted by friends. Please write to L. C. M., care of this magazine.

EXIE.—Remember Maggie and Tony? Still love you, and have tried for years to find you. We are in California now. Please write to Earl, care of this magazine.

SCOTT, LIZZIE MAY.—Information appreciated by her sister, Mrs. Alice Scott Hawkins, Route 2, Jackson, Michigan.

MACLIN, MALINDA, and daughter, **MOLLY.**—Daughter of Henry Bowie. Please write to your brother, Francis Marion Bowie, Navsota, Texas.

ENDRES, ROBERT.—If I can hear from you everything will be all right. Please write to Edith, care of this magazine.

PING, INEZ.—Have waited so long for a letter. Everything will be O. K. Please write to Mother, care of this magazine.

WILLIAMS, SIDNEY, or **STANLEY, WILLIAM E.**—Five feet eleven inches tall, light complexion, blue eyes, and brown hair. Weighed one hundred and eighty-five pounds. Sixty-five years old. Last seen in Newburg, Missouri, in 1924. Information appreciated by Mrs. Sophia Williams, 801 East Twenty-fourth Street, Kansas City, Missouri.

ATTENTION.—Would like to hear from members of the Seventy-third Co., C. A. C., who were stationed at Fort Monroe, Virginia, in 1909. Address O. E. Lynch, care of this magazine.

WOODS, PAUL.—Five feet two inches tall, black hair, and blue eyes. Weighed about one hundred and twenty-five pounds. The son of William Woods, of Marstedar, Pennsylvania. Last heard from in June, 1929, in Omaha, Nebraska. Information appreciated by his sister, Mrs. Alvin Trout, Eighth Street, Barnesboro, Pennsylvania.

BRINK, ALLEN L.—Please write at once to Gavin, care of "The Billboard," Cincinnati, Ohio.

BURRIS, RUFUS.—Twenty years old. Was placed in an orphan asylum in 1921. Has one brother and two sisters. Information appreciated by his grandfather, George Taylor, Box 353, St. Clair, Missouri.

BOTTZER, JOHN.—Formerly of Brooklyn, New York, and Miami, Florida. Information appreciated by an old pal, Miami Jack, care of this magazine.

WATSON, GRACE.—Last heard from in Fairmont, West Virginia, in 1927. Important news. Please write to Cecil Hamilton, 6902 Hamilton Avenue, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

WHITLOW, ERNEST GEORGE.—Last heard from in Lee, Massachusetts. Information appreciated by Peter McDonough, Bancroft Hospital, Tewksbury, Massachusetts.

BROWN, GEORGE and **CLARENCE.**—Worked as waiters in Pocatello, Idaho, in 1909 and 1910. Formerly of Yakima, Washington. Information appreciated by L. H. Meacham, 1310 Michigan Street, Toledo, Ohio.

BRADLEY, CHESTER E.—When last heard from was on his way to Ione, Washington, to visit his mother. Information appreciated by an old friend, Nell, care of this magazine.

CLARKSON, LOUISE.—Fourteen years old. Left home August 1, 1929, saying she was going to Hollywood. Five feet six inches tall, fair hair, blue eyes. Information appreciated by Mrs. C. J. Clarkson, care of this magazine.

COOLEY, E. H. and **LUCY.**—Last seen leaving Needles, California, on September 7, 1929, for Hollywood. Man is very dark, and the woman blond. Gave their ages as twenty-two, but the woman looks eighteen. Information appreciated by Mrs. C. J. Clarkson, care of this magazine.

GIBSON, MABEL and **WILLIAM S., JR.**—Last heard from in Montreal, Canada, in 1922. Information appreciated by father, W. S. G., Box 348, Salt Lake City, Utah.

ANGLEN, PAT, ROSETTA, GENETA, and **MAY.**—Were sent to an orphans' home in Monticello, Arkansas, about twenty-two years ago. Information appreciated by Mrs. B. C. Done, Box 4, Mileshoe, Texas.

GRANDE, MRS. TONY GIA, nee **JOSEPHINE SANTOMASSO.**—Left Rome, New York, about twenty-two years ago. Lived for a while in San Francisco, California. Information appreciated by Marie Conaccio, 788 Delmas Avenue, San Jose, California.

CONWAY, MICHAEL J.—A blacksmith. Left New Britain, Connecticut, in 1922. Information appreciated by Family, care of this magazine.

GATES, LAWRENCE.—Five feet tall, blue eyes, and dark, curly hair. Formerly of Eaton, Michigan. Remember the girl you wrote so many letters to? Please write to Ruth G., care of this magazine.

R. C. L.—We are holding a letter at this office for you. Please send for it. Address A. F. L., care of this magazine.

WILKINSON, LEWIS J.—Mother is sick. Please write to E. E. Rutledge, Box 353, Venice, Illinois.

SAPP, H. P.—Forgive ill feeling and harsh words. Remember the day on the beach, the ride, and the pledge. Please write to your old buddy, Kenneth Fleming, 5582 Pershing Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri.

FREEMAN, RITA.—Last known address was French Hospital, San Francisco, California. Information appreciated by Kenneth Fleming, 5582 Pershing Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri.

HOSTELLE, EDGAR.—Twenty-three years old. Last heard from about eight years ago, in Oakland, California. Information appreciated by his sister, Pearl Lamb, 210½ West Eleventh Street, Michigan City, Indiana.

WHITACRE, MELVIN.—The son of Buck and Betty Kennedy Whitacre. After our mother's death I was adopted and taken to Missouri. He was last heard from in Kentucky. Information appreciated by his sister, Mrs. Jane Hamilton, 674 Garfield Avenue, West, Detroit, Michigan.

DISBRON.—Would like to hear from a family of this name who lived in Port Chester, New York, some time ago. Important. Information appreciated by California 77, care of this magazine.

BAUMIESTER, WILLIAM.—Last heard from in Mankato, Minnesota, in 1903. Seventy-three years old. Information appreciated by his stepdaughter, Mrs. John Dattler, care of this magazine.

HERBERT.—We received all your letters from Horse Creek, Wyoming, but ours were returned unclaimed. Please write to mamma, Mrs. Susie Brumbaugh, Phoenix, Arizona.

GOENEN, EARL.—Please write to your half brother, John Goenen, care of this magazine.

GOENEN, JOE.—Please write to your cousin, John Goenen, care of this magazine.

ANDERSON, HERMAN RAMSEY.—Twenty-six years old. Five feet seven inches tall, dark-brown hair, and brown eyes. Last heard from in Burgen, Kentucky, in 1923. Information appreciated by Mrs. M. K. Anderson, 646 East Commerce Street, San Antonio, Texas.

WATROUS, or **VANDERHAYDEN, JOHN EDWARD.**—Thirty-one years old. Six feet tall. Last heard from in Garden Prairie, Illinois, in 1918. Mother and stepfather separated about five years ago. Please write to mother, Mrs. Rose Watrous, R. R. 3, Ada, Michigan.

RODMAN, FRANK or **SAM.**—Glad things happened as they did. Am going to be married shortly. Please write to Queenie and Lena, 508 West One Hundred and Thirty-ninth Street, New York City.

MADDEN.—Would like to hear from any one of this name in Kentucky or Tennessee. Please write to Box 588, Jamestown, North Dakota.

ATTENTION.—Would like to hear from any one who served in Company C, Thirty-third Infantry, in 1918. Address Box 588, Jamestown, North Dakota.

KRAUSE, PAUL.—Last heard from when working on a ranch near Denver, Colorado. Information appreciated by R. M. S., care of this magazine.

BYRD, W. R. or **W. H.**—Last heard from in San Diego, California, in 1914. Mother is very ill. Please write to Ed Byrd, Collinsville, Illinois.

L. W. M.—Mother is worried. Please write at once to Lima, care of this magazine.

BURNS, GRANVILLE A.—Last heard from in Borger, Texas, in 1920. Information appreciated by Kenneth Sowersby, Box 1, U. S. S. "Colorado," care of Postmaster, San Pedro, California.

SMITH, MRS. MARY.—Forty-five years old. Had red hair. A native of Alabama. Had one child, born some time in February, 1907, at Nashville, Tennessee. Information appreciated by J. C. Forbis, 588 West Third Street, Dayton, Ohio.

BOYLES, C. H.—Last heard from in Amarillo, Texas. Very tall and distinguished looking. Information appreciated by his niece, F. Myers, 633 Raleigh Place, S. E., Washington, D. C.

MEREDITH, MARY ANN.—Last seen in Galveston, Texas, en route to Houston. Want to explain why I wasn't there Friday night. Still have the present you gave me, and am very anxious to hear from you. Please write to Albert Englishby, 1101 Frio Street, Harrisburg, Texas.

TOWLER, OSCAR O.—Fifty-five years old. Five feet ten inches tall, weighed about one hundred and seventy-five pounds, brown hair and eyes. Last heard from in San Francisco, California, about eighteen years ago. Had been in Seattle, Washington, and in Alaska. Information appreciated by W. H. Whitney, care of this magazine.

YOUNG, JOY.—Blonde and has blue eyes. Last seen in Mitchellville, Iowa, in 1922. Formerly of Council Bluffs, Iowa. Information appreciated by his pal, Cora Schults, care of this magazine.

BENNETT, MR. and **MRS. W. W.**—Last heard from in Watson, Mississippi. Moved to Arkansas. Information appreciated by J. C., Box 228, Clarksdale, Mississippi.

LANE, CLIFFORD J.—Twenty-five years old. Last heard from in Steubenville, Ohio. Played with Aldrich Imperial Hawaiians. Information appreciated by M. M. T., care of this magazine.

MUKA, HENRY.—Twenty-six years old. Last heard from in Steubenville, Ohio. Played with Aldrich Imperial Hawaiians. Information appreciated by M. M. T., care of this magazine.

Name This House

$500.00 GIVEN!

We Will Pay $500.00 Cash For the Most Suitable Name For This Beautiful Six-Room House

ANY NAME MAY WIN!

Offer open to everybody. Nothing to buy or sell. No Obligation.

WHOEVER SENDS THE MOST SUITABLE NAME WILL WIN $500.00—NOTHING ELSE TO DO!

This is a new Colonial Bungalow—cozy, convenient—yet a roomy house. It is meeting with such popul[illegible]y that we are desirous of obtaining a su[illegible]able name for it for use in connection with our building program, and will pay $500.00 cash for the most suitable name suggested. There are no strings tied to this offer. Sending us a name for this house does not obligate you in any way. Nothing to buy or sell. We merely want a suitable name and are willing to pay $500 in cash for the best one sent in.

ANY NAME MAY WIN

Surely you can think of an appropriate name for such a beautiful home. Do not use more than two words. Any word or words may be used or any combination of words, such as Ridgelawn, Shadynook, Hearthome, or names like Sunshine Inn, Journey's End, etc. No matter how simple your suggestion is, you cannot afford to neglect sending it in at once. Any name may win. Possibly you may have the most suitable name right on the end of your tongue this minute. If you have, send it in at once, and $500 in cash is yours.

$100.00 Extra for Promptness

We want the name for this house quickly, and are going to pay the winner an extra $100.00 cash just for promptness—or a total of $600.00 in all. See coupon below. Send your suggestion today!

FOLLOW THESE RULES

This offer is open to everyone, excepting members of this firm, its employees and relatives. Each participant may send only one name. Sending two or more names will cause all names submitted by that person to be thrown out. Contest closes June 28, 1930. Should two or more persons submit an equally suitable name for this house, the full amount of the prize offered will be paid to each one so tying. To win the $100.00 CASH PROMPTNESS PRIZE, the winning name must be mailed within three (3) days after this announcement is read. This $100.00 CASH PROMPTNESS PRIZE will be added to the $500.00 prize and paid to each one submitting the winning name, provided suggestion is mailed within three (3) days after this announcement is read. See coupon—act quick!

FREE! In appreciation of your suggesting a name for this house real quickly, we will send you FREE and POSTPAID, the floor plans and blue print of this beautiful house. Understand, this does not obligate you in any way. Fill out and mail the coupon TODAY—QUICK! ANY NAME MAY WIN.

HOME BUILDERS' SOCIETY
1193 Lincoln Way, Batavia, Illinois

Enclosed with this coupon on separate sheet is my suggestion for a name.

Date this offer was read.....

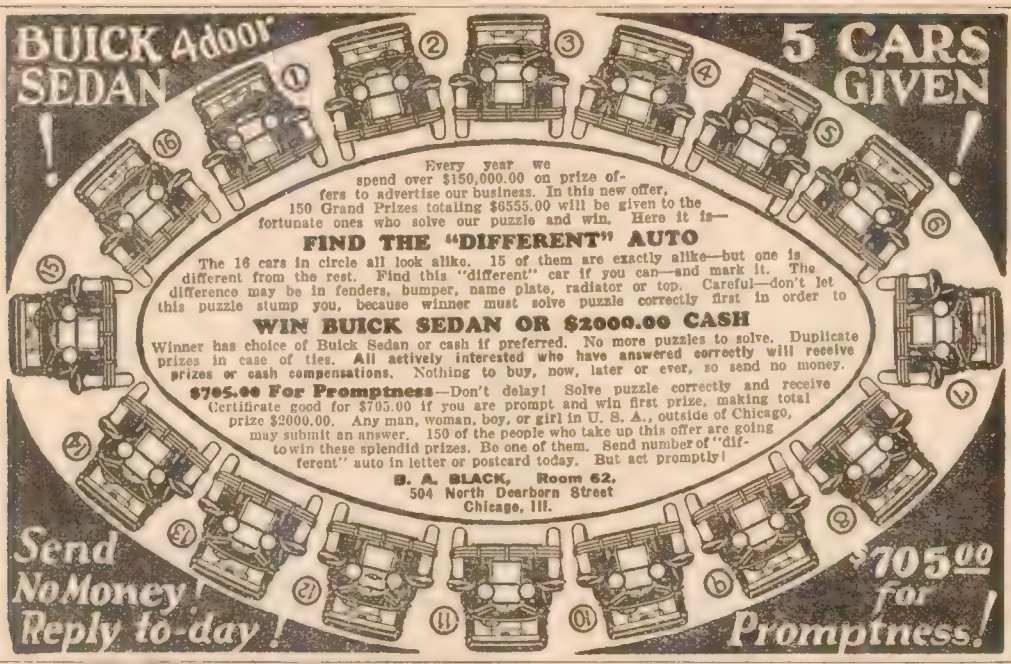
Date my suggestion is mailed.....

My Name .....

Address .....

Town .....

State .....


BUICK 4door SEDAN !
5 CARS GIVEN !
Every year we spend over $150,000.00 on prize offers to advertise our business. In this new offer, 150 Grand Prizes totaling $6555.00 will be given to the fortunate ones who solve our puzzle and win. Here it is—
FIND THE "DIFFERENT" AUTO
The 16 cars in circle all look alike. 15 of them are exactly alike—but one is different from the rest. Find this "different" car if you can—and mark it. The difference may be in fenders, bumper, name plate, radiator or top. Careful—don't let this puzzle stump you, because winner must solve puzzle correctly first in order to
WIN BUICK SEDAN OR $2000.00 CASH
Winner has choice of Buick Sedan or cash if preferred. No more puzzles to solve. Duplicate prizes in case of ties. All actively interested who have answered correctly will receive prizes or cash compensations. Nothing to buy, now, later or ever, so send no money.
$705.00 For Promptness—Don't delay! Solve puzzle correctly and receive Certificate good for $705.00 if you are prompt and win first prize, making total prize $2000.00. Any man, woman, boy, or girl in U. S. A., outside of Chicago, may submit an answer. 150 of the people who take up this offer are going to win these splendid prizes. Be one of them. Send number of "different" auto in letter or postcard today. But act promptly!
B. A. BLACK, Room 62,
504 North Dearborn Street
Chicago, Ill.
Send No Money! Reply to-day!
$705.00 for Promptness!

YOU WANT A BIGGER INCOME
SELL SHIRTS !

Earn big money from the start. Let Quaker help you. Wonderful sample Outfit gets orders. Finest Men's Shirts, Ties, Underwear, Hosiery. Unbeatable values. Unique sales features. Ironclad guarantee. FREE Shirts, Ties, Cash Bonuses. Write for Free Outfit NOW! Dept. Y-3
QUAKER SHIRT CORP., 1107 Broadway, N.Y.

STOP Tobacco

No human being can escape the harmful effects of tobacco. Don't try to quit without assistance. Let our simple inexpensive remedy help you. A complete treatment costs but $2.00. Every penny promptly refunded if you do not get desired results.

Ours is a harmless preparation, carefully compounded to overcome the condition, that will make quitting of tobacco pleasant, and easy. It comes with a money back guarantee.

Anti-Tobacco League P. O. Box B-3 OMAHA, NEBR.

TRUSS USERS

STUART'S ADHESIF PLAPAO-PADS are different—being mechanico-chemico applicators—made self-adhesive purposely to keep the muscle-tonic called "Plapao" continuously applied to the affected parts, and to minimize danger of slipping and painful friction. The fabric is soft as velvet, and being adhesive—

Awarded Gold Medal

—clings closely to the body without straps, buckles or springs. Easy to apply, comfortable, inexpensive.

Awarded Grand Prix

For almost a quarter century stacks of sworn testimonials from many different countries report success—without delay from work. The epidermatic absorption of Plapao utilizing "mechanico-chemico" therapy tends toward a natural process of recovery, *after which no further use for a truss.* MAIL COUPON BELOW TODAY

FREE TEST COUPON

PLAPAO LABORATORIES, 220 Stuart Bldg., St. Louis, Mo.

Send me a FREE 10 day test supply of the remedial factor Plapao and 48-page illustrated book on Rupture; no charge for this now or later.

Name .....

Address .....

CORRECT Your NOSE !

Improve your appearance with the Anita Nose Adjuster. Shapes flesh and cartilage—quickly, safely and painlessly, while you sleep. Results are lasting. Doctors praise it. 68,000 users. Write for 30-Day TRIAL OFFER and FREE BOOKLET.
ANITA INSTITUTE, 354 Anita Bldg., Newark, N. J.

Has No Cough Now; Asthma Disappeared

Death Seemed Certain. Quickly Found Lasting Relief.

Despairing sufferers from asthma and bronchial cough, will be glad to read this from Mrs. Myrtle Willett, 5900 Maxwell Ave., Detroit, Mich.:

"I had bronchial asthma 2 years. I couldn't lie down and slept only 3 hours a night. I was so near death, I thought every night would be my last. After taking half a bottle of Nacor I began to sleep, and improve. My cough soon disappeared, and my strength returned. Now I do not choke or cough at all, and feel perfectly well."

Hundreds of people who suffered for years from asthma and bronchial coughs, state that their trouble left and has not returned. Their letters and a booklet of vital information will be sent free by Nacor Medicine Co., 773 State Life Bldg., Indianapolis, Ind. Write for this free information, and find out how thousands have found lasting relief.

Win $2,000.00

Send Name for This New Magazine. Learn How to Win $2,000.00 and Get $1.00 Worth of Luxurious Toilet Articles, at Once, Absolutely FREE

Send Any Simple Name

The plainest or simplest kind of a name may win. Use one, two or three words separately or combined. "Really Beautiful" or "Beauty and Happiness" are suggestions. Send the name you think of and send it right away, as the best name is often the one that flashes through your mind.

Win $1,000.00 Here is the magazine to name. A new magazine for the development of personality, happiness and wholesome beauty. Some people develop a gracious manner and countenance, radiate with beauty by helping others. Personality—Manner—Poise—Wholesomeness—How to improve Your Happiness—The Latest in Hair Dress, Cosmetics, Perfume and beauty aids.

$1.00 Worth of Toilet Articles FREE

No matter who you are or where you live you have as good a chance to win as anyone. **We will give more than $3,000.00 in twenty cash prizes and send more than 10,000 Luxurious Toilet Articles absolutely FREE.** Payment of these prizes and fulfillment of this promise is guaranteed by a responsible, reliable firm. Send your suggestion for a name right away and we will send you full information how to get a wonderful package of Toilet Goods from which you can select $1.00 worth absolutely FREE, $3.00 worth to be kept by you on our easy plan, or returned if you desire.

Send Name At Once And I'll send you full information, give you three-fourths of the necessary credits to win $1,000.00 and tell you how to get $1.00 worth of Toilet Articles absolutely FREE. Follow these simple rules:

1. Send only one name for only one name from each family will count.
2. This offer not good outside of the United States proper or in Des Moines. Employees or relatives of employees of this Company are not permitted to compete, nor children under 15 years of age.
3. Duplicate prizes paid in case of ties.

Someone who sends a name will win $1,000.00, if prompt an additional $1,000.00 making $2,000.00 in all. How can you win $2,000.00 more easily? $2,000.00 all your own to spend as you like? It may mean independence, it surely means a snug fortune. Our plan is simple and easy. Send name today. Do it right away.

C. P. CHASE, Desk 706, 21 Center Street, Des Moines, Iowa

Send **NO** *money*

Bargain Introductory SALE!

READ IT! Folks said I'd lose money at this price—SOLID gold effect genuine Bradley Bulldog—guaranteed by 100 year old, million dollar Factory: Only **$3.75** and postage—the lowest price in history! But I'm willing to lose money if necessary to get you to wear, depend on, and enjoy this splendid new Bradley Watch. You'll be so delighted with its accuracy! Your friends will be astonished at its beauty! Of course I'll make my profit out of the repeat orders from your friends. **Think of it**—SOLID gold effect case, **GUARANTEED 25 YEARS**, richly engraved—it is beautiful! ACCURACY guaranteed by million dollar Factory—100 years of success back of this handsome new watch! *1930 MODEL.*

SEND NO MONEY Pay **$3.75** and postage when your watch arrives. Nothing more to pay.

FREE Genuine Waldemar Chain and Knife to match if you order TODAY. MONEY BACK IF NOT DELIGHTED—You risk nothing!

CHAIN AND KNIFE GIVEN GOLD BOND GUARANTEE

COUPON—MAIL THIS OR POSTAL CARD

BRADLEY, Building H-251, NEWTON, MASS.

Rush my Watch, Knife and Chain. Will pay $3.75 and postage on arrival. Nothing more to pay and my money back if I am not delighted. I RISK NOTHING.

Name..... Address.....

City..... State.....

R. T. I. R. T. I. QUALIFIES YOU TO MAKE MONEY AND ITS SERVICE KEEPS YOU UP-TO-THE-MINUTE ON THE NEWEST DEVELOPMENTS IN RADIO, TELEVISION AND TALKING PICTURES R. T. I.

$60 to $125 00 A WEEK Radio Operator

$8 to $15 00 A DAY Servicing and Repairing Radio Sets

$5000 00 A YEAR AND UP Radio Engineer for Broadcasting Station

$85 00 A Week Installing and Repairing Talking Picture Equipment

GOOD JOBS Right at Your Finger Tips

WHEN YOU ARE R.T.I. TRAINED IN

RADIO-TELEVISION - Talking Pictures

BIG PAY JOBS! SPARE TIME PROFITS! A FINE BUSINESS OF YOUR OWN! They're all open to you and other live wire men who answer the call of RADIO. The fastest growing industry in the world needs more trained men. And now come Television and Talking Movies—the magic sisters of Radio. Will you answer this call? Will you get ready for a big pay job NOW and step into a BIGGER ONE later on? You can do it EASILY now.

FRED H. SCHNELL
Chief of R. T. I. Staff
Twenty years of Radio Experience. First to establish two-way amateur communication with Europe. Former Traffic Manager of American Radio Relay League. Lieut Commander U. S. N. R. Inventor and Designer Radio Apparatus. Consultant Radio Engineer. Now in charge of R. T. I. Radio Training — and you will like his friendly manner of helping you realize your ambition.

R. T. I. Home Training Puts You in This Big Money Field

Radio alone, pays over 200 MILLION DOLLARS a year in wages in Broadcasting, Manufacturing, Sales, Service, Commercial Stations and on Board the big sea going ships and many more men are needed. Television and Talking Movies open up other vast fields of money-making opportunities for ambitious men. Get into this great business that is live, new and up-to-date, where thousands of trained men easily earn $60 to $100 a week—where $10,000 a year jobs are plentiful for men with training plus experience.

Easy To Learn At Home—In Spare Time

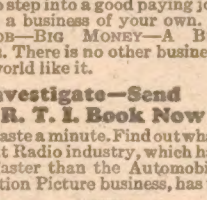
Learning Radio the R. T. I. way with F. H. Schnell, the "Ace of Radio" behind you is EASY, INTERESTING, really FUN. Only a few spare hours are needed and lack of education or experience won't bother you a bit. We furnish all necessary testing and working apparatus and start you off on practical work you'll enjoy—you learn to do the jobs that pay real money and which are going begging now for want of competent men to fill them.

Amazingly Quick Results

You want to earn BIG MONEY, and you want some of it QUICK. R. T. I. "Three in One" Home Training—Radio-Television-Talking Movies—will give it to you, because it's easy, practical, and is kept right up-to-date with last minute information. In a few weeks you can be doing actual Radio work, making enough EXTRA MONEY to more than pay for your training. In a few short months you can be all through—ready to step into a good paying job or start a business of your own. A BIG JOB—BIG MONEY—A BIG FUTURE. There is no other business in the world like it.

Investigate—Send For R. T. I. Book Now

Don't waste a minute. Find out what the great Radio industry, which has grown faster than the Automobile and Motion Picture business, has to offer you. Find out what other men are earning. SEE HOW EASILY YOU CAN GET STARTED. Get the facts about Radio, Television and the Talking Pictures, firsthand, in the big R. T. I. FREE BOOK. Learn what this R. T. I. "Three in One" Home Training can do for you. Mail the coupon for FREE BOOK Now.



RADIO & TELEVISION INSTITUTE
Dept. 803
4806 St. Anthony Court, Chicago

R. T. I. R. T. I. TRAINS YOU AT HOME FOR A GOOD JOB OR A PROFITABLE PART TIME OR FULL TIME BUSINESS OF YOUR OWN

R.T.I. Training Brings Big Jobs Like These!

$500 EXTRA MONEY IN 2 MONTHS
Your radio course has enabled me to earn over $500 in two months. This is all spare time work, as I have a permanent position with my father in our store. I give you all the credit for the above. —J. NOFFSINGER, R. I. Box 87, Greenville, Ky.

MAKES $25 A DAY
I make as high as $25.00 per day and have made $600.00 in 2 months from Radio work. That's not so bad when I'm only 19 and in a small town. You did all you said you would and much more.—FLOYD KNEELY, Box 91, St. Joe, Ind.

SALARY RAISED 33 1-3%
I am now Radio Service Manager for the H. N. Knight Supply Co., distributors for Eveready Radio Receivers in Oklahoma, and Texas Panhandle, with an increase in salary of about 33 1-3% since I enrolled with your school. —EARL P. GORDON, 618 E. 6th St. Oklahoma City, Okla.

RADIO & TELEVISION INSTITUTE
Dept. 803, 4806 St. Anthony Court, Chicago

Send me Free and prepaid your BIG BOOK "Tune In On Big Pay" and full details of your three-in-one Home Training (without obligating me in any way).

Name.....

Address.....

City..... State.....

Missing Page

Inside back cover

Why CAMELS *are the better cigarette*

Camels are made of the choicest tobaccos grown—cured and blended with expert care.

Camels are mild and mellow.

The taste of Camels is smooth and satisfying.

Camels are cool and refreshing.

The fragrance of Camels is always pleasant, indoors or out.

They do not tire the taste nor leave any cigaretty after-taste.

© 1929, R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company, Winston-Salem, N. C.